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Georgiana and her Father,

OR

CONVERSATIONS ON NATURAL PHENOMENA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THREE YEARS IN ITALY,"
"LITTLE GEORGIANA," &c.

——Seest thou those worlds
That roll at various distance round the throne
Of God, innumerous, and fill the calm
Of heaven with sweetest harmony, when saints
And angels sleep?

Pollok's Course of Time.

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INTRODUCTION.

OUR readers, we presume, are not unacquainted with "Little Georgiana." We would again introduce her to your notice, no longer as a child, but having "put away childish things:" in other words, being arrived at the "years of discretion;" the number of which years we cannot correctly ascertain. She had learnt how to prize that which is good, and wise, and holy; and was still grasping after more of that knowledge which can only be communicated by the teaching of the Holy Spirit: and which as a "shining light, shineth more and more unto the perfect day." In her early days, she experienced that "the ways of religion are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Her favourite

pursuits were not attended with the disappointments and mortifications which too frequently embitter the enjoyments of youth. The pleasures of the returning seasons in the country afforded her an endless variety. And although she enjoyed the society of her younger friends, her father was her favourite companion: why he was so, we hope the following conversations will sufficiently evince, and induce those who read them to follow Georgiana's example in taking knowledge of the works of their Creator in the days of their youth, that they may be kept from the vanity which their time of life is subject to, and restrained from walking "in the way of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes; for, for all these things God will bring them into judgment."

PREFACE.

IN exploring the operations of nature, the object of the writer of these pages is to lead the thoughts of her young readers to nature's God.

"Nature displayed" in all its several branches, to the intelligent mind, must ever be a deeply interesting study; but the investigation which traces not the finger of God, not only in the rolling orbs which perform their "punctual round," —the winds and storms fulfilling his word,—the magnificent swell of waters whose proud waves are stayed, and whose bounds are fixed, so that they cannot pass; —the returning seasons, the heat, the cold, the rain, the dew;—the lightning's vivid flash preceding the hollow reverberation of the thunder, or the more awful crash of the thunder-bolt, with all the phenomena by which this wondrous world is surrounded,—but also in the

minutest fibre of the fly's fluttering wing; the rich colouring, and delicate pencilling of the lowliest flower which "wastes its fragrance on the desert air;"—the songs of the birds, their feathery clothing, together with the admirable texture, and mechanism, and never-ending variety of the works which He hath made—falls very short, indeed, in the knowledge worth attaining; for

> "The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth,
> By understanding hath he established the heavens,
> By his knowledge the depths are broken up,
> And the clouds drop down dew."

Cold and insensible must be the heart which the contemplation of such objects does not enliven. Of his people it is written, "They lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is."

God himself speaks of the universal admiration excited by the glorious completion of his perfect work, "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

The pride of human intellect leads it to

imagine that it can compass all things without acknowledging the hand which created them, or seeking from God the revelation of his works. To such are these words addressed, "Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness." Well may the inquiry be made, "Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? Art not thou he, O Lord our God? therefore we will wait upon thee: for thou hast made all things."

Nor would I confine the attention of my readers merely to the works of creation, while the amazing plan of redemption lies open to our view. To know Jesus Christ and him crucified is above all knowledge, since that alone can make wise unto salvation. In Him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

By some it may be deemed inexpedient

to bring the deep things of God before the youthful mind ; but what the Holy Scriptures clearly reveal, must not be kept back from any—" What God hath joined let not man put asunder."

It is not simply by man's teaching that we can hope to learn, " but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit : for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." It is the Holy Spirit's office to take of the things of Christ and shew them unto his people ; and that children are thus taught of the Lord, we have his own authority. " I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father ; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

GEORGIANA AND HER FATHER,

&c. &c.

CONVERSATION I.

"Praise God in his sanctuary,
Praise him in the firmament of his power."
Psalm cl. 1.

GEORGIANA had from infancy been accustomed to early rising; a morning walk with her dear father was amongst her chief gratifications, and her well-known tap at his study-door, seldom failed to call forth her indulgent parent ready equipped to accompany her.

How much they lose, dear papa, she observed, who waste these pleasant hours in bed. What a pity that such a scene as that which now presents itself, should

be shut out from any who have eyes to behold it! The dew-drops sparkle like the most brilliant gems on the shining leaves. The fields are so green, and the air so fresh and balmy, and the birds from every spray warble forth their little notes so sweetly! O papa, what a beautiful world God has made for us!

Very true, my love. Nature does indeed present an animated picture at this sunny season of the year. And we ought never to contemplate it without looking from nature to nature's God. Let us behold the first great cause in every lovely object by which we are surrounded. Let us lift up our hearts in praise to Him who hath given us all things richly to enjoy. Even the exhilarating melody of the birds ought to make us feel what a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful. O what a fair creation this would be if sin had never marred the perfect work of God!

Still, papa, God will perfect his own

plans; for surely by his word we are taught, that the whole was arranged by an unalterable decree before the foundation of the world.

To which particular passage of the sacred record do you allude, Georgiana?

There are very many, papa; so many indeed, that they cannot be enumerated; they run through the whole scriptures like the links of a chain which can never be broken. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," is our Lord's invitation to his own people, sufficiently convincing to the understanding, but that men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.

You are right, my dear; this invitation could only have been given to those whom God the Father had chosen in Christ "before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love."

Holy and without blame before Him

who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity!—O how can *we* ever attain such excellence who are in ourselves altogether corrupt?

My dear Georgiana, I thought you understood the message of glad tidings better than to ask me such a question. Our fallen nature can never rise, we never in ourselves can attain the smallest particle of excellence; yet we are told, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." This holiness is not our own; it is the gift of God, imputed to all the flock of Christ, who was the Lamb, without blemish and without spot, slain from the foundation of the world, fore-ordained to be an all-sufficient atonement for all the sins of his people, and to obtain for them "eternal redemption." "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

But, papa, St. Paul asks, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid." And our Saviour himself

says, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Very true, Georgiana, we must be created anew in Christ Jesus. We must be born again of the Spirit, or we can never hope to enter into the kingdom of God.

Then, papa, our nature is changed; we partake of the nature of God, and become like him?

In spirit we do, but not in the flesh; for "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Have you not read the seventh chapter of Romans?

Yes, papa, and now I begin to understand that we have two natures within us, the one opposing the other.

It is a warfare which never ceases in the believer, Georgiana; the flesh against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: "so that (as Paul says) ye cannot do the things that ye would." Gal. v. 17. It is altogether the work of the Holy Spirit to bring about a spiritual change.

"We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith" in Jesus Christ, who is the righteousness of his people. We are told that "Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness;" though he might boast of his works, "but not before God." His ready obedience was the fruit of his faith, for which he looked not for reward; had he done so, he would have claimed it as a debt due to him; but he arrogated no merit to himself in what he did; for in such a spirit, if a man work, "the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

You are quoting from the fourth chapter of Romans, papa; I know it well, and have remarked that "faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness," and his faith worked by love,—the love of God shed abroad in his heart which was the cause that "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God."

Yes, Georgiana, he gave *all* the glory to God (the inexhaustible source of all gifts and graces) for the gift of that faith which was imputed to him for righteousness; he had nothing that he did not receive, therefore, nothing in himself whereof to glory. All who "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham," shall in like manner inherit the promise. The righteousness of Christ will be imputed to them also,—to his seed, which includes all believers. By this righteous faith we are justified, and obtain peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And surely, papa, those who are so highly favoured by God must produce fruit to his glory.

Certainly, my child, "The tree is known by its fruits." If Jesus be the root, the tree will be green and flourishing: "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." His Spirit in his people will prevent their fulfilling the lust of the flesh, and lead them in the way of holiness. "Prevent and follow me, O God," should be their unceasing prayer.

The fruits of the Spirit, papa, are beautifully contrasted with those of the flesh in the fifth of Galatians, where we are plainly told that they who do the works of the flesh "shall not inherit the kingdom of God;" but that "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

If we have not the Spirit of Christ, Georgiana, we are indeed none of his; but if we are not in the flesh, that is, if we are changed, the Spirit of God dwells within us. "To be carnally-minded is death; but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace: because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." If Christ be in us, he is stronger than the carnal mind, and keeps it down, "the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness." "He shall quicken your mortal body by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." His graces shine in the lives of believers, all who see them can take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus; by whose righteousness the guilty sinner is for ever acquitted. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight;" "but now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law

and the prophets; even the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all that believe; for there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ."—From the tenth verse of this chapter (Romans iii.) the natural state of all men is described, "for none are righteous, no, not one." From such a mass of corruption, free grace selects the chosen flock, all of whom are found walking in the same broad road which leadeth to destruction. From the twenty-first verse, you see clearly set forth the fulness and freeness of redemption to all the purchased flock of Jesus Christ.

In that one expression in the twenty-second verse, papa, "unto all, and upon all them that believe" is included, (as it appears to me) the outward imputation of righteousness like a robe covering the sinner round, and holiness imparted by

the operation of the Holy Spirit. Is this a progressive work?

The gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit are progressive. Paul did not esteem himself to have attained all, neither that he was already perfect, but says, "I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." Eager in the pursuit of the only knowledge which can make wise unto salvation, and which in comparison, all other knowledge is but foolishness, he counted not himself to have apprehended; and forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, he pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And he exhorts his brethren; "Let us therefore *as many as be perfect*," (knowing that in the perfection of Jesus they were even then perfect, though imperfect in understanding those mysteries) "be thus minded;" and adds, "and if in any thing ye be other-

wise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." This passage sufficiently evinces the growth in knowledge and grace which the believer attains "whose conversation is in heaven; from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself."

It is strange, papa, that unceasingly as we read the word of God which so completely testifies that we must look out of ourselves, that we are not taught by it, but are continually cleaving in some degree to our own wretched performances! But St. Paul, I think, papa, had cast down and forgotten all his pharisaical pride and learning, when taught by the Holy Spirit such things as are hidden from the wise and prudent, and are revealed to babes. His human attainments, of every description, he counted but as

dross when he found the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.

O may we thus follow on to know the Lord! said Mr. Alford.

The path which the father and daughter had chosen for their morning ramble was not along the beaten high-way; the retirement of the unfrequented mountain dell was better suited to their meditations on the works of God, and to talk of his doings towards the children of men. The bramble was suffered to extend unmolested its lengthened branches over the narrow circuitous winding, and the wild rose and violet 'wasted their sweetness on the desert air.' Overshadowing trees and rugged rocks screened the close valley from the too powerful beams of the sun, and rendered the walk, in this dry season of the year, the most sheltered and agreeable that could have been selected. The light foliage of the trees was gently agitated by the refreshing morning breeze, and was reflected in the meandering of a

silvery brook which rippled in sweet murmurs over its rocky bed. Georgiana was of a disposition, and at a time of life, to find enjoyment in the surrounding beauties of nature, none of which were suffered to escape her quick observation. Every object and occurrence delighted her; when their progress through the rough and thorny path-way was impeded by interlaced brambles and hedge-rows, she heeded not the rents and scratches she received, while eagerly clearing away the obstacle from before her tenderly beloved parent's footsteps. Near the termination of the beautiful valley the mountain torrent rolled over a high rock and dashed precipitously its foaming spray into a basin below, which imparted its contents to the fertilizing brook of the verdant vale, and gave drink to the herds which browsed upon its banks. The further progress of the father and daughter was at an end; they seemed rivetted to a spot which called forth all their admiration.

Oh! exclaimed Georgiana, was there ever any thing so enchanting as this place! Surely no work of art could combine such striking beauties! Look, dear papa, how nature has adorned that projecting cliff with wreaths of wild roses. I would not strip it of its lovely decoration, yet amidst such luxuriant branches, I might take off some to carry home for mama's flower-pot.

Provided you could get at them, Georgiana! Before you make the attempt, however, consider the danger to which you would expose yourself in clambering the rock, in which expedition I am not sufficiently active to be your companion. Take my advice, be satisfied where you are; the path we are in, though narrow and thorny, is safe: the one for which you would forsake it is certainly broader, but much more hazardous; here you can scarcely escape a few scratches; there, every step would threaten destruction.

Especially, papa, when compelled to

leave my support behind. I believe I had better remain in the narrow way with your dear arm to save me from falling.

You will think it the wiser course, Georgiana, when you reflect on the allurements which would draw you away; fading flowers no sooner plucked from their stem, than withered and gone! Oh! how many like my thoughtless girl grasp after a shadow, and lose the substance!

That, however, is not now my case, dear papa, for still I feel your supporting arm; and I hear your parental voice which calls me back, when inclined to wander from the right path.

The path, my child, must first be pointed out to me, before I can direct you. O may he who is the way, and the truth, and the life, be your unerring guide and counsellor. May his everlasting arms be your shield, and buckler, and refuge; and his word a light to your feet, and a lantern to your paths in the way which leadeth unto life.

CONVERSATION II.

"By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens." Job xxvi. 13.

THE father and daughter had found a seat amongst the rocks, which afforded them shelter from the sun, and from the sudden fall of a shower, (which in that variable season was very common) and presented in front the magnificent prospect of the wide spread world of waters, reflecting the azure blue of the canopy above on its calm surface. On the right, the view was bounded by high peaked mountains, whose dark and craggy summits seemed to touch the bright vault of heaven. On the left a clump of hawthorn, clothed in its freshest bloom, wafted fragrance around.

How delightfully has nature provided a seat for us! observed Mr. Alford.

Man's device could never have furnished us with the contemplation of such splendid objects, nor have planned so glorious a prospect. How many instructive lessons present themselves in all which surrounds us! Of what should the sun, shining in his brightness, remind us, Georgiana?

The sun is an emblem of the Almighty Creator himself, papa? And we should never behold him without reflecting on the magnificent six days' work which called into existence those lights in the firmament of the heaven which divide the day from the night, and are "given for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years."

'Of all celestial bodies, first the sun
A mighty sphere he fram'd, unlightsome first,
Though of ethereal mould: then form'd the moon
Globose, and every magnitude of stars,
And sowed with stars the heav'n thick as a field.
First in the east the glorious lamp was seen,
Regent of day, and all th' horizon round,
His longitude through heav'n's high road: the gray
Dawn, and the Pleiades before him danc'd,
Shedding sweet influence.'

Milton's language is very poetic and beautiful, Georgiana. Before we hear of the creation of the sun, God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." Light must therefore have emanated from him who is its source, without the medium of that resplendent globe of light. Can you recollect any other applicable lines of Milton's?

Yes, papa.

'Hail! holy light, offspring of heav'n first-born,
Or of the eternal coeternal beam,
May I express thee unblam'd? since God is light
And never but in unapproached light
Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee,
Bright effulgence of bright essence uncreate,
Or hear'st thou rather pure ethereal stream,
Whose fountain who shall tell? before the sun,
Before the heav'ns thou wert, and at the voice
Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest
The rising world of waters dark and deep
Won from the void and formless infinite.'

Observe, Georgiana, how concisely and emphatically all this is described in the sacred revelation! "The heavens and the earth were finished, and the host of

them." Great indeed, beyond our finite comprehension was that Almighty word which pronounced "Let there be," and the host of bodies which no man can number were poised in ether, and thenceforth sailing through fathomless space, revolve their undeviating rounds.

"*Let there be light!*" proclaim'd the Almighty Lord:
Astonish'd chaos heard the potent word:
Through all his realms the kindling Ether runs,
And the mass starts into a million suns:
Bend, as they journey with projectile force,
In bright ellipses their reluctant course;
Orbs wheel in orbs, round centres centres roll,
And form, self-balanced, one revolving whole.
Onward they move amid their bright abode,
Space without bound the bosom of their God.'

A thought strikes me, papa, which I wish to communicate to you, but fear I shall not be able in such a manner as to render myself intelligible. Very often, when I am anxious to explain myself, my ideas become so confused, that I find it impracticable.

That may proceed from different causes, Georgiana. It may be from too much haste in speaking; 'think before you

speak,' is a good old adage; a proper arrangement of your ideas beforehand is very necessary to their clear explanation. Young people are often in too much haste to speak, from a kind of self-satisfaction at their pre-conceived idea. But pray let me hear yours.

I think, papa, in speaking of the sun as an emblem of the Creator, we might have enlarged greatly on the subject. In the epistle of James i. 17, he says, "Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." The sun, as the central point round which three descriptions of bodies revolve, the planets, the fixed stars, and the comets, and from whence so many of them receive their light, may very justly be called "the father of lights."

It is a very just comparison, but not an original one of your's, although you may suppose it. This emblem is too

striking, not to have been observed l
many who delight in the knowledge
the Lord, and in tracing his benefice
dealings towards the children of men. T
sun remains fixedly shining on the bodi
which surround him. Whilst they tu
and change, he changes not. When nig
throws her sable garment on every obje
it is because the part of our globe whi
we inhabit is turned from the sun: or
the day-time, when his light is obscure
it is by the clouds and vapours whi
ascend from the earth. His light shin
uninterruptedly; the darkness procee
from another quarter. Sometimes t
shadow of the moon, in passing betwe
the sun and the earth eclipses his ligl
but from him there is no shadow. A
thus it is, my dear Georgiana, with t
great Father of lights, in whom is inde
no variableness, neither shadow of tur
ing. He is always the same, whilst
are continually changing. We turn fr
him, he never turns from us. While

change, he changes not. Our sins, and our unbelief, like a thick cloud, hides him from our view, but in him there is no shadow of darkness; all around him is light and glory, which never can be clouded nor obscured. The sun is too dazzling an object for our weak sight to gaze on. To behold him, we must look through some dark medium. We cannot see God and live: he must put us into the cleft of the rock, and cover us with his hand before his glory passes by.

We can never appear before God, papa, until covered with the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness, and he is the rock in which we may be hidden.

Christ is indeed all, Georgiana; from him every good and perfect gift cometh, from him in whom is the godhead bodily. His blood purchased us; his righteousness covers us; his spirit sanctifies us; his mercy pardons us; his free grace saves us; we have nothing to offer, nothing to bring. Wanting all things in our poverty

and emptiness, we must come with n
other claim than our deep necessities
and we have that promise which canno
lie ; "Him that cometh unto me I wil
in no wise cast out. Ask, and ye shal
receive, seek and ye shall find, knock
and it shall be opened unto you."

Well but, papa, you know what we fin
in the fifteenth chapter of John, "Y
have not chosen me, but I have chose
you, and ordained you, that ye should g
and bring forth fruit, and that your frui
shall remain : that whatsoever ye shall as
of the Father in my name, he may give i
you." These are our Lord's own words: i
is he who chooses us, we do not choose him

No, Georgiana, we do not choose him
because the natural heart is at enmit
with God. What a mercy, therefore, tha
he chooses us, even while we are a
enmity with him. What a mercy that h
changes that enmity into love, that h
takes away the garment defiled with sin
and puts upon us the spotless robe of hi

righteousness. He teaches us to know our wants, and then relieves them. O what a boundless mercy, past finding out, is it, that the whole plan and work of our salvation is his, and his alone, for if the smallest part had been left to ourselves, our total ruin would have been inevitable.

Why is it, papa, that this comforting doctrine is not more generally received?

The reason is obvious, my love; our Saviour himself declares it in addressing his elect. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." And He also says, "Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not."

And in another place he says, papa, "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."

CONVERSATION III.

" Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." Isaiah xxx. 26.

WHILST contemplating the sun as eclipsing every lesser light, let us carry on the simile, and regard that glorious orb of day as a type of the Sun of righteousness, declaring the glory of God, while he diffuses light and heat around a dark cold world. That material light rises in the east, and travels with indescribable swiftness over all the dark corners of the earth. Wherever there is speech or language, the sound is gone forth and declares, 'the hand that made me is divine.' In the eastern extremity of the globe, in Asia, the Sun of righteousness arose; and

here we contemplate the meridian of divine light "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world:"—that world which was made by Him, yet knew him not, that world lying in wickedness; which He came to redeem; He, who was the true light, and in him was no darkness at all. He was the life, and gave his life a ransom for many.

Do you recollect, papa, St. Paul's description of the Lord's appearance, as exceeding the sun in brightness, shining round about him?

I do, Georgiana, and also the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the rising of the true light. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall appear upon thee; and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Here is clearly depicted,

"the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star." "Whereunto (St. Peter says) ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts."

What a beautiful description is given in the last two chapters of Revelation, of the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, papa! "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof: and the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's

book of life. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." Oh! papa, what happiness to be an inhabitant of this city!

Yes, Georgiana, the whole church of Christ shall assemble there. You should not have omitted the first appearance of the holy city, "coming down from God

out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Such is the tender relationship which Christ bears to his church, she is called, the "Lamb's bride:" and also, "the King's daughter, all glorious within," being the temple of the Holy Ghost; "her clothing of wrought gold." "She shall be brought to the king in raiment of needle work;" this identifies the pure robe of Christ's righteousness, wrought out by his own hands as the ornament and glory of his church. Being "of wrought gold," signifies "the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy." "The virgins her companions that follow her," means the gathering in of the Gentiles. "With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace." These are "the ransomed of the Lord," who shall "come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Each one may say, as

well as the church collectively, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." "In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty unto the residue of his people."

There will be nothing but rejoicing, papa, in the holy city, because "God himself shall be with them. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

What a delightful picture is here represented! and how different from the present state of the church. She is now indeed in the wilderness, yet the days are approaching when, as it is said, "as

the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." In the twelfth chapter of the Revelation, the church is described as having escaped into the wilderness, where she is nourished and saved from the serpent, which "cast out of his mouth water as a flood, that he might cause her to be carried away," but that was not possible, because greater is He that is for her, than he that is against her. The flood means persecutions, which are swallowed up, the earth opening her mouth for that purpose. The Lord is an ever present help in every time of need. David says, "What time I am afraid. I will trust in thee." He can, and does deliver his people out of "the deep waters." The water-flood shall not overflow them. When permitted to rush down like a torrent upon the ungodly, the overwhelming element will acknowledge Almighty power, and be restrained before it come too near to his chosen. "The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw

thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled." "The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by, the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high." "He sent from above, he took me; he drew me out of many waters," is the experience of many a tried servant of God, who endured his fatherly correction for a time, and was thereby given to see the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

Dear papa, it is a great blessing when chastisement has that effect upon us.

No doubt of it, my love, "Happy is the man whom God correcteth." "For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." "He maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword. Thou shalt be

hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh."

In the thirty-first Psalm, papa, it is said, "Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." And in Isaiah liv. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

The simile still holds good, Georgiana. A father who loves his child corrects him, as knowing that "the rod and reproof give wisdom." And that "a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame;" foolishness being "bound up in his heart," the rod of correction is necessary to drive it out. "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul." "He that spareth the rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth

him, chasteneth him betimes." "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with a rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." All these passages describe the loving corrections of a father, who takes the punishment of his beloved child into his own hands, but would not give him over to the stripes of another. It is a proof of the love of God when he chastens his children; and of his anger when he withdraws it. "Why should you be stricken any more, ye will revolt more and more?" "Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock: they have refused to return." They were invited, "Turn you at my reproof." "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would

none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." Again it is said, "They refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears that they should not hear. Yea, they have made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts has sent in his Spirit by the former prophets; therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts. Therefore is it come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts: but I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate." Again, it is said of Jerusalem, "She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew not near to her God."

It has been truly observed, that afflictions never leave us as they find us; and that, if we are not the better, we are the worse for them.

David, papa, was enabled to say, that "in faithfulness God had afflicted him."

Yes, Georgiana, and David said also, that it was good for him to have been afflicted. "Every one that is perfect shall be as his master." Was ever sorrow like his sorrow, who was laden with the iniquity of us all? "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes, (not our own) we are healed." "For the transgression of my people was he stricken." And to redeem us "from the curse of the law, he was made a *curse* for us." He took upon him our nature; he had a feeling of our infirmities; and was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. We are told that he suffered being tempted. He was the servant of servants. His humiliation was deeper and lower than we can conceive, and all

this he submitted to for the sake, not of his friends, not of those who loved him, but of his enemies; of those who hated and scoffed at him. And oh! what an example of resignation was his! "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" It was a cup of sorrow without one sweet ingredient to alleviate its bitterness. He drank it to the dregs. He was, indeed, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. It is hardness of heart and unbelief which makes us wish for a different lot. Prosperity is a dangerous rock, against which many a frail bark has foundered. It is a pinnacle on which Satan is very fond of placing his votaries. But in the furnace of affliction the Lord chooses his people. He knows their soul in adversity. "You only have I known of all the families on earth, *therefore* I will punish you for all your iniquities." We must, my dear child, pass through the cloudy valley on our way to glory; but the Sun of Right-

eousness "turneth the shadow of death into the morning." The believer's passage from this life to life eternal is not darkened, it is but shadowed for a moment, before the everlasting day dawneth, and the shadows flee for ever: and even for that small moment they are not forsaken; Jesus is with them; his rod and his staff supports and carries them through. He is the all-prevailing conqueror, and the last enemy sinks powerless under his invincible arm: he alone, whose strength is Jehovah's, can bring his people "out of darkness, and the shadow of death, and break their bonds in sunder."

The scripture abounds in beautiful similes, papa. The Lord's "choosing his people in the furnace of affliction," brings to my recollection what is said in Malachi on the same subject. "He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver."

And in Zechariah, Georgiana, we find a similar passage. "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried." We shall see the beauty of this much more clearly by observing the process of refining metals. When put into the hands of the workman, they are in a very rough unpolished state; but he puts them into the furnace, and sits by, watching them closely, that too much fire may not damage them, while he continues refining until all the dross is cast away, and the unmixed silver or gold remains; which he never pronounces thoroughly purified, until he can see the reflection of his own face in it. "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin." While passing through the burning fiery furnace, the Lord never loses sight of his people. His watchful eye is over them, and he will not lay upon them more than they

are able to bear. In our natural state we are far from reflecting back his image. We are rude, and rough, and unpolished; altogether unlike a God of purity and holiness; but he does not leave us as he found us; "He sits as a refiner of silver," and by his Holy Spirit works the marvellous change; and we are so illumined "as with open face to behold as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." Then we reflect back the light and the glory we have received. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." As the hard metal is melted, so does he soften the adamantine heart. "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"

It is a great mercy, papa, when any means succeed in bringing us to the Lord.

If any other means would answer we may be assured that a God of love would not use the rod. Mercy is the attribute in which he delighteth, and he "comes out of his place" to punish. Our sins are the boisterous waves which buffet us. Yet we see Jesus trampling them down, and we hear his encouraging voice, "It is I, be not afraid." He is our rock, our refuge, our haven of rest. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."

I think, papa, that it is an inexhaustible subject of wonder and praise, that the great and glorious God, against whom we are continually sinning in thought, word, and deed, should be our only refuge: a criminal would if possible escape from his judge; but here our Judge is our hiding place.

In vain would the guilty seek safety elsewhere, Georgiana; every other refuge fails. We cannot screen ourselves from his vengeance, whose eyes run to and fro

over the whole earth; its deepest dens and caves cannot conceal us. In vain would we run "into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." The consuming fire of his wrath will search every crevice, and cranny, and "refuge of lies." In the deep waters there is no safety, for "the sea shall give up the dead which are in it." We cannot flee from our Judge, but we are invited to flee to him to find a "strong refuge." Jesus stands with open arms to receive and shield us. Jesus has done all, cancelled our debt, paid our ransom, blotted out the handwriting of God against us, and provided our covering. The robe of his righteousness is not folded up, it is an open garment, with which he meets the returning prodigal, to cast it round him. No iron bar can close heaven's gate; Jesus is the way, and Jesus is the door by which all

his flock have free admittance. "They shall come in and out and find pasture." In types and shadows this way of salvation was revealed to the prophets of old, by whom the faithful record is transmitted to us for whom Christ came in the flesh, to perfect for ever all them who believe. And now the new dispensation takes place of the old. The ark is pulled down; the cities of refuge are no more; the sprinkling of the blood of bulls and goats is abolished, for it is not possible that such sacrifices could take away sin. They were but the shadow of good things to come, our sanctification required a holier, more perfect offering; therefore, God himself prepared a body; and through the one offering of Jesus Christ *he* hath "perfected for ever them that are sanctified;" and has made with us a new covenant, sure and stedfast;—no longer binding u to do the works of the law as a means o salvation, but bidding us "believe in th Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be s

ved." He "magnified the law and made it honourable," by having fulfilled for us, all which it enacts; and we have his infallible word and promise, of which the Holy Ghost is our witness, that he will put his laws in our hearts, and in our minds he will write them; and our sins and iniquities will he remember no more; and when remission is full and complete, there is no more offering for sin. No atonement for weak insufficient human nature to make. We are chosen in him, and perfected in him, who was the "Lamb slain before the foundation of the world."

This subject reminds me of a little anecdote which Mrs. St. George related to us when we visited her in town, after her return from the country, where, as I have often heard her say, she enjoys her summers exceedingly, because in every little plant and flower she can trace the hand of omnipotence, as well as in the grander works of creation; and she finds

great pleasure in spiritualizing every little passing occurrence.

What was the anecdote, Georgiana?

In one of her solitary walks, a beautiful little bird attracted her observation; it seemed in such an extacy of enjoyment, while perched upon a spray, warbling forth its sweetest notes! Suddenly a hawk appeared hovering over it; and the little songster took flight, pursued by its enemy, swift of wing. Mrs. St. George watched in breathless anxiety, feeling her inability to rescue the bird, whom she expected every moment to see in the talons of the hawk; it flew from one side to the other, and round and round, till giddy and exhausted, it dropped panting upon a rock. The hawk, sure of its prey, was in the very act of pouncing, when the bird perceived a small crevice and escaped into it, and its disappointed enemy sought it in vain. I need not tell you, papa, how dear Mrs. St. George spiritualized this little adventure, which

she could scarcely recount without tears, so intense were her feelings.

It was indeed, my dear, a beautiful illustration. "I will put thee in the cleft of the rock." "God himself is the rock of my refuge." He alone is the shield, the sanctuary and exceeding great reward of his people. No prowling enemy, no "roaring lion going about seeking whom he may devour," nor all the powers of earth and hell combined, can snatch a sheep out of the great Shepherd's fold. They are hedged round about and secured, as Noah was in the ark, when "the Lord shut him in," and lifted him, and those who were with him, above the waves which overwhelmed the guilty world and all which was found therein.

Christ is indeed the man spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, who is to His people, "as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

Dear papa, I should suppose that none who have not traversed dry and burning sandy deserts (which may truly be called a "weary land") can thoroughly conceive the rest and refreshment to be produced by cool "rivers of water," and the overshadowing influence of a great rock.

Such a wilderness would this world be to the flock of Christ, if he were not their "tabernacle, for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and rain."

While the father and daughter were thus expatiating on a subject which is indeed inexhaustible, the sun became obscured by a black cloud, and soon afterwards a sudden flash of lightning, accompanied by a loud clap of thunder, made Georgiana start from her seat, exclaiming, Oh! papa, had we not better remove to a greater distance from these rocks and trees, which may attract the lightning.

I think not, Georgiana, he answered,

for even now heavy drops of rain begin to fall, by which we shall be drenched if we leave our shelter; let us remember the subject of our conversation, and the power which rules and directs the storm. It bursts now with fury over our heads, and we are but scantily protected from its effects; not one ray of sun-beam cheers the dark and lowering atmosphere. Let us, therefore, instead of leaving, keep the closer to the rock, whilst we reflect on the benefits of the tempest. Do you not now feel the presence of God? Is it not a most consoling assurance, that the wind and the rain obey his word? that he is at this very moment directing the storm to fertilize and refresh the earth: not a blast blows, nor a drop of rain descends, but with some commission of beneficence, and the shower of blessing will be succeeded by the balmy freshness of its effects. See it now passing off. Behold the light which bursts from behind the dark clouds. How splendid the contrast

between that glorious sun and the black clouds as they roll off! Whilst we gaze, let us remember always that there is a very bright light behind the darkest and densest cloud. So it is in our journey through life; clouds of sorrow often assail us, but they all vanish before the brightness of "that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

CONVERSATION IV.

"The day is thine, the night also is thine. Thou hast prepared the light and the sun. Thou hast set all the borders of the earth. Thou hast made summer and winter."—Psalm lxxiv. 16, 17.

At mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them which journeyed with me. Acts xxvi. 13.

THAT indeed, papa, was a resplendent brightness which removed the thick darkness under which St. Paul laboured, when he persecuted the church of Christ even "unto the death, binding and delivering into prison both men and women."

By a miraculous interposition in his favour, Georgiana, the scales fell from his eyes: and the glorious truth not only enlightened his understanding, but touched his heart, when it was given him to believe, that "God so loved the world that

he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Marvellous indeed was the sacrifice, which infinite Almighty love could alone devise to rescue fallen man.

"'Twas great to raise a world from nought—
But greater to redeem."

In contemplating the numerous benefits we derive from the sun, papa, our thoughts have a wide field to range through. When the wintry season passes away, the face of nature is revived by its influence. The insects are roused from their stupid torpor, and are seen in busy motion providing for their future wants and enjoyments. The leaves and flowers again decorate their forsaken branches; the songs of the little birds again warble through the groves, and dulness and gloom give place to brightness, and beauty, and animation; for spring is truly a joyous season.

"Look nature through, 'tis revolution all,
All change, no death: day follows night, and night

The dying day: stars rise, and set, and rise—
Earth takes the example;—see the Summer gay,
With her green chaplet, and ambrosial flow'rs,
Droop into pallid Autumn—Winter gray,
Horrid with frost, and turbulent with storm,
Blows Autumn and his golden fruits away:
Then melts into the Spring—soft Spring, with breath
Favonian, from warm chambers of the south,
Recals the first: all, to reflourish, fades:
As in a wheel, all sinks, to reascend."

YOUNG.

"Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth."

Every exhilarating object calls loudly upon us, my daughter, to join the universal song of praise; and even while our tongues are silent, with our hearts let us make melody to the Lord. Whilst we regard the sun as the author and finisher of the delightful renovation produced at this season of the year, let us further reflect on the cold, dismal, dark state in which this blooming world would be involved, if deprived of its fertilizing and cheering beams. Where would be our verdant fields? Where the rich foliage

which embowers the trees? Where the balmy fragrance wafted through the air by a numberless variety of sweet-scented flowers? Where the velvet lustre of their glowing colours? Where the harmonious melody which swells upon every breeze? Where the corn, and wine, and oil which sustain us? Where the cheerful light of morning to dispel the mists and shadows of night? There would be a universal stillness, and deadness, and darkness. No returning day; no gladdening spring; no blooming summer; no mellow autumn. Uninterrupted gloom would overshadow the desolate world. Imagine, if you can, the dreariness, and solitude, and horrible gloom of an eternal winter, uncheered by even an indistinct ray from a single sunbeam! The human mind revolts from an image so terrific, yet such a state of things but faintly pourtrays "the blackness of darkness" in which the miserable soul is involved, on whom the Sun of righteousness never shines; therefore,

my beloved child, whilst we praise God for temporal mercies poured without measure into our full cup; let us much more praise him for the light of that sun which will never go down, and for the glory of that grace which renews us in the spirit of our mind, and by which we are saved with an everlasting salvation.

The renewal of all things at this season of the year ought to remind us of that new birth without which, as our Lord told Nicodemus, a man "cannot see the kingdom of God." "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." And again, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." The unawakened sinner may justly be compared to the seed in the ground before it has taken root. The wintry season with its rent and withered garments must pass away, and all nature's productions spring into newness of life. So must the Christian be stripped of the filthy rags of his

own righteousness, that he may be arrayed in a new and spotless robe. "Old things must pass away, and all things become new." When the seed takes root downward, it throws off its old covering, before it shoots upward a new and flourishing plant, which still requires to be warmed by the sun, and fanned by the breeze, and refreshed and nourished by the shower to ensure its vigorous growth, that it may bud, and blossom, and bear fruit. Thus it must be with the Christian, in whose heart the good seed is sown; grace must prepare the ground, the sun of righteousness must warm and soften it; the Holy Spirit must breathe into it a quickening influence; and the dew of heaven must nourish its growth, when it "strikes root downward, before it can bear fruit upward." "I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell

as Lebanon." In this similitude is described the flourishing tree of the Lord's planting; such a tree as is known by its fruits; and "such as be planted in the house of the Lord."

The entire economy of nature, papa, is calculated to enlighten and enlarge the ideas of a believer. The earth's diurnal revolution affords a daily and nightly warning of the unceasing journey of life; of the variableness of all things here below; and of the necessity that we should prepare to meet our God.

The lives of all who are found in Jesus, Georgiana, are bound up in the bundle of life; all things are ordered and sure concerning his redeemed; and by his decree, all things are wisely disposed, temporally as well as spiritually. The return of day and night are inconceivable blessings, and equally necessary for the comfort and well-being of all the creatures of God. As each part of the earth revolves round the sun, the hours of dark-

ness are those of nature's needful repose, and for refreshing coolness after heat. Then "the beasts of the forest creep forth." We lay ourselves down to sleep, and arise, for the Lord sustains us:—again the same bright and beautiful object bursts through the gloom, and rouses us from our slumbers, and the prowling beasts of prey, hating its glare, gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens, —while "man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening." As is observed by one of our commentators— "The light which God willed, how good is it! He approved of it. If the light be good, how good is he who is the fountain of light! God divided the light from the darkness; so put them asunder, as that they never could be joined together or reconciled; for what fellowship has light with darkness? In heaven there is perfect and perpetual light, and no darkness at all; in hell is all darkness and no gleam of light. Let us acknowledge God in the

constant succession of day and night, and consecrate both to his honour."

I remember a very poetic description of the rising sun, papa, by Jeremy Taylor. "But, as when the sun, approaching towards the gates of the morning, first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a cock, and calls up the lark to matins, and by and by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns, like those which decked the face of Moses when he was forced to wear a veil, because himself had seen the face of God; and still while a man tells the story, the sun gets up higher till he shews a fair face, and a full light, and then he shines one whole day, under a cloud often, and sometimes weeping great and little showers, and sets quickly; so is a man's reason and his life."

The sun, Georgiana, is that beauty of heaven which gives light to the rolling

planets in their orbits. The sun, t
moon, and all the revolving orbs whi
glitter in the spangled firmament
heaven, are under the control of the
Almighty Creator. At his word th
stand still, and the planets are stopped
their course.

As is recorded by Joshua, papa, "Th
sun stood still in the midst of heaven, a
hasted not to go down about a whole da
And there was no day like that, before i
or after it, that the Lord hearkened un
the voice of a man." It could not ha
been the sun, papa, but the whole plan
tary system which was stopped.

The same miraculous power which cr
ated at the beginning, could, with equ
facility, delay and uphold the planets
their course, my dear. The potent com
mand was issued, "in the sight of Israe
Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, a
thou, moon, in the valley of Ajàlon: a
the sun stood still, and the moon stayed
to the utter consternation of the Canaa

itish nations; whose principal deities were the sun, moon, and heavens, or air; to whose care they committed their country; and to whose power they attributed their success in war. They now found that these objects of their idolatrous worship, through the all-powerful mandate of the God of Israel, conspired in aid of their overthrow, when the darkened air or heavens poured down heavy hail-stones to avenge the cause of his people; for "they were more which died with the hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword." These very objects in themselves declare the grandeur of the power which formed them. "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things; that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by their names; by the greatness of his might; for that he is strong in power; not one faileth." Isa. xl. 26. "The stars shine in their watches, and rejoice; when he calleth them, they say, Here we

be: and so with cheerfulness they show light unto him that made them."

What part of the Bible is your last quotation taken from, papa, I do not recollect it.

From Baruch, one of the apocryphal books. In Ecclesiasticus I find another very beautiful illustration of our subject. "He made the moon to serve in her season, for a declaration of times, and a sign to the world. From the moon is the sign of feasts, a light that decreaseth in her perfection. The month is called after her name, increasing wonderfully in her changing, being an instrument of the armies above, shining in the firmament of heaven, the glory of the stars, an ornament giving light in the highest places of the Lord."

David also says, papa, "He appointeth the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down." The prophet Habakkuk alludes in a remarkable manner to that strange event recorded in Joshua, "The

sun and moon stood still in their habitation; at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear." Who would dare to deny or cavil at any instance of the power of the Lord?

The satanic suggestion by which man originally fell, still makes him presumptuously imagine that nothing can be real which goes beyond his finite comprehension;—he, who is himself but as a worm of the earth, and knows not by what power he enters, or leaves the world, or how he is enabled to think, to act, to move!—All, all is a mystery which he can never unravel.

I often hear people say, papa, that they do not know why God permitted evil; yet if evil had never been permitted, the wonderful riches of his grace could never have been discovered.

The Judge of all the earth must do right, Georgiana. We should always bear in mind that God is the sovereign disposer of all, as well as the original

Creator. Certainly, if man had not sinned, the glory of his redemption had never been given to God. Yet God tempts no man; he never infused evil into any one, but he brings good out of evil; and for this holy and merciful purpose, permitted the evil which works together for the everlasting benefit of his own elect. See Isaiah xlv. 7, 8, 9. Evil must be produced by a satanic agent; but this powerful agent could not work, if a superior power did not give him liberty. After the sop Satan entered into Judas, and hurried him on to his own eternal destruction. Christ says, "Of those thou hast given me I have lost none, but the son of perdition;" who was, no doubt, one of "the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction."

Job is a striking instance, papa, of God's having suffered Satan for a time to torment his servant, for his everlasting benefit.

No doubt, my dear, all things, both good

and evil, are working together for the final rest and happiness of the children of God. When the Lord permits his servants to be tried and buffeted, he sends them deliverance, and then they experience the blessedness of "the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." Lest there should be any mistake on this subject, the apostle James adds, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Christ himself, papa, was tempted.

He was tempted, Georgiana, "in all points like as we are, yet without sin." He had a feeling of all our infirmities, because He took upon himself our very

nature. Yet, "that holy thing" which the angel announced to the Virgin Mary should be born of her, though tempted, remained spotless, because He was, and is God himself, and it is not possible that the holy God, who is purity itself, could sin. He is perfect, and unchangeable, holiness being amongst his brightest and most beautiful attributes, and the one in which his people most delight and glory: he makes them understand that without his holiness no man shall see the Lord: covered with that white robe, they know that they shall stand before their Almighty Judge, perfect even as he is perfect.

By being perfect in Christ, papa, do you mean to say that he having completely fulfilled the law for us, we have nothing more to do with it? Why then is it given, if not as a rule for our conduct?

Let us keep as close as we can to the scripture, Georgiana, "By the law is the knowledge of sin." The law is given to

convince us that we have broken it, and that by it we are altogether condemned. "It was added because of transgression." "The law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Through the infirmity of the flesh, the law cannot rule us, therefore, it becomes our schoolmaster, to hand us over to Christ, who ruleth the hearts of his people. Paul says, "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Some persons speak of the law, as if they thought that something of their own must be added to Christ's work. But, "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." We are told that if "we be led by the Spirit, we are not under the law." The true followers of God, worship him in spirit and in truth. "Not in the letter. for the letter killeth, but the Spirit maketh alive." Submitting themselves

to be wholly governed and guided by the Spirit which dwells in them; they have no confidence in the flesh; and counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, their Lord and their God, they disclaim the Pharisaical righteousness which is of the law; and cling and cleave to that righteousness which is apprehended by faith in Jesus Christ, "according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself;" and in his perfection, being perfect, they press toward the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus. By that liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, they are enabled to go on their way rejoicing; being assured that "the reproach of Egypt is rolled away"—their fetters are broken;—they are released from bondage;—being made free, they are free indeed, and have entered "into the glorious liberty of the children of God." "Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing;" for, "after

that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster," no longer under the law, but under grace. The law can bring no charge against us, our Surety having fulfilled all its enactments. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth?" Our inheritance is purchased, and we, who are "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," may claim it by right.

I understand now, papa, better than I ever did before, the beginning of the fifth chapter of Romans. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." This peace Paul fully experienced, or he could never have described it so accurately.

"The secret of the Lord is with those who fear him." "It is a joy with which a stranger intermeddleth not." Such a "peace as passeth the understanding" of an unbeliever.

And of a believer also, I think, papa, for surely he cannot tell how this work is brought about in him. All he can be sure of is, that he had no part in it himself. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

The promises of God, are indeed all yea and amen, to those who are born of the Spirit; they are privileged to rejoice in the Lord alway, believing the promise of Sovereign love. "With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Here is the only ground of hope for sinners. While dwelling in the flesh they must feel its burdens, and groan under its

infirmities: yet they walk not after it, but after the Spirit which is in them. There are two principles always active, and always at variance, the carnal mind, at enmity with God, and the spiritual mind, which delights in the law of God. These two being as opposite as light and darkness, can never be reconciled, and the warfare which is maintained is unceasing; thus it is that "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force, for stronger is he that is for us, than he that is against us. The captain of our salvation will at last put all things under his feet. Jesus is the shepherd of his flock. His watchful eye is always over them. He fights their battles. They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hands. All that the Father hath given him, he will bring with him."

It was that fearful struggle, papa, described by St. Paul, "the inward man which delighted in the law of God, and

another law in the members warring against the law in the mind," which constrained him to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

It would appear, Georgiana, that the apostle was almost in despair, until the spirit of liberty enabled him to answer rejoicingly, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," in whose power he felt himself to be more than conqueror. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made him free from the law of sin and death," and now the cry of despair is changed into acclamations of joy and gladness: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." The saints of the Lord are invited to shout for joy, yea to shout aloud, for great is the price at which they are redeemed; and deep is the hole of the pit from whence they have been

digged. They are privileged to rejoice evermore, even though exercised by manifold temptations, for which they are given to see that there is "a need be," and that they shall last but for a season. It is a trial of faith much more precious than gold;—much more for the advantage of those who are exercised thereby, than any golden treasure could purchase. Believing in him "whom not having seen they love," they "rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." Their light affliction was but for a moment, and is succeeded by triumphs of joy; having received the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry Abba, Father; and being sons, God has sent the spirit of his Son into their hearts. No longer slaves under bondage; they are freed-men, *sons*, and heirs of God; joint heirs with, and through Christ. Here is the true work of faith; the gospel coming, "not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." Which word,

though received in outward affliction, is accompanied with inward joy of the Holy Ghost.

The people of God ought indeed to rejoice with joy unfeigned. A repining disposition dishonours and grieves his Holy Spirit. The repeated murmurings of the Israelites drew down heavy judgments upon them. "Because thou servest not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all; and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee."

These are awful denunciations. May the Lord avert such from our nation in general, and from ourselves individually. May he make us willing in the day of his power, to do whatsoever we do to his glory: still looking to, and trusting in him who giveth us all things richly to enjoy.

CONVERSATION V.

"He telleth the number of the stars: he calleth them all by their names." Psalm cxlvii. 4.

WHAT is to be the subject of our conversation this morning? said the fond father, as he felt the gentle pressure of his daughter's arm, which he drew within his own at the commencement of their walk.

I ought to ask you that question, dearest papa; there are so many subjects which are deeply interesting, and concerning which my stock of information is still very limited. The science of astronomy, I know, as a female, I can but slightly scan; yet I cannot look upwards and behold the sun, and the moon walking in her brightness, and the shining orbs which stud the

clear canopy of heaven, without exclaiming with David, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him! and the son of man that thou visitest him!"

It is, and ever must be a subject of admiration and praise, as indeed, every Christian experiences, although none can comprehend its vastness.

Has it ever been ascertained, papa, of what materials the great body of the sun is composed?

That is a discovery, Georgiana, which I should think must for ever baffle the powers of the telescope, and every other device which the genius of man can invent. The opinion once received of its being a globe of fire, is discarded, and it is now supposed to be an opaque substance involved in a luminous atmosphere extending far and wide through the surrounding space.

Within which atmosphere, papa, the

eleven planets with their eighteen satellites revolve round him. I am not surprised at the idolatrous heathen having chosen so glorious an object as the sun for their deity; especially while they experienced the incalculable benefits which are derived from his influence. If the sun be not a great fire, as was supposed, from whence proceeds the intense heat of his rays?

What covers the tops of the highest mountains, Georgiana?

Snow, papa. It is not so long since I crossed Mount Cenis, but that I can well remember its inaccessible snow-capped heights, dazzling, yet never dissolving by the sun-beams; neither can I forget the intense heat we experienced at the foot of that alpine mountain, nor the striking contrast between the eternal winter which reigned above and the rich valley below, clothed in waving fields of ripened corn and vines bent down with their loaded branches. As well as I can recollect,

papa, the height of that mountain is c
puted at 9000 feet. Some say it is m
than 11,000.

But 6000 of which are accessible:
even at that height we were surrounde
fields of snow. If the sun were a great b
of fire, would not its influence be stron
on the heights than in the valleys?

That I should think, papa, is incon
vertible; yet how is the heat of the
accounted for?

You must study chemistry, Georgia
you will then comprehend how heat
be produced by the mixture of fluids
in themselves hot.

Though I know very little yet of
science, I have seen such mixtures
duce such effects. I have often amu
myself with little experiments, such
striking flint and steel together to wa
the sparks of fire they emitted,
making cold water hot by throwing
it some quick-lime.

Yet there was no fire or heat in

one of these bodies when separate. It is supposed that the sun's heat is produced by his coming in contact with the atmosphere of the planets. Caloric, or elementary fire, is the name given by chemists to that property, which combined with, or passing to, various bodies, produces heat. The light and heat of the sun are conjectured to proceed from gaseous combustibles.

That being the case, papa, those distant planets which we imagined must be in such a deplorable state from excessive cold, may be as warm as ourselves, and the springs and rivers in Mercury and Venus may be always frozen instead of boiling.

Certainly those nearer planets may not possess the property of attracting as much heat as subsists in our atmosphere, and may consequently experience a degree of cold much more intense.

How is it known, papa, that the sun is an opaque body?

From his immense distance, the observations of astronomers are liable to many mistakes. Herschel thinks that the sun may be a habitable globe surrounded by an atmosphere entirely occupied by luminous clouds which, being occasionally wafted by the winds, leave openings through which the dark body of the sun can be discerned. These openings, he conceives, are the varying spots which are seen on the sun's disc.

I read lately, papa, in some book, that these spots are detached bodies floating in the sun's atmosphere.

Their irregularity in number, magnitude, and continuance, renders that supposition improbable. Some of the spots have at times been computed nearly to equal the earth in dimensions, at other times, they are considerably diminished, and even disappear altogether; occasionally forty or fifty of them have been visible, and sometimes, but one, or two; so perpetually do they vary.

How are these spots distinguished on an object so dazzling to the eyes as the sun?

Do you recollect, Georgiana, at Orvieto, how plainly you could discern an eclipse of the sun during the brightest part of a clear summer's day?

Perfectly well, papa. By means of a smoked glass I saw clearly the dark body of the moon eclipsing the sun, as she came in between him and the earth.

By placing such a glass next the eye, before the eye-glass of a reflecting telescope, about three feet long, the spots on the sun's disc are easily distinguished. Still, however, as I already remarked, the immense distance of that luminous body, and the dazzling splendour by which it is surrounded, must necessarily render very dubious and inaccurate the discoveries of astronomers. Of this only can we be certain—that it is "the great light which rules the day."—The lesser light which

rules the night being much nearer, the observations which have been made are much more satisfactory.

The moon, papa, as well as I can recollect, is but 24,000 miles distant from us, and the same spots are always visible on her disc, by which it is known that she presents the same face to the sun. She performs her double revolution round her own axis, and round the earth, in the same period of time, that is to say, in twenty-nine days, and in twelve hours, which comprises her day and night.

How beautifully poetic is the description of night in the Iliad :

'As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light;
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumbered gild the glowing pole;
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
And tip with silver ev'ry mountain's head;
Then shine the vales; the rocks in prospect rise;
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies;
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the light,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.'

The earth must appear as a moon to the moon, but thirteen times larger. Her revolution being thirty times more rapid, her continents and islands resemble spots, which by their appearing and disappearing, must give the inhabitants of the moon an accurate rule for calculating time.

Yes, papa, if the moon has inhabitants; but we cannot be certain of any thing that we do not find in the sacred record.

Very true, my love, yet we may feel assured that all those sparkling orbs which stud the vault of heaven are fulfilling the purpose decreed by their wise and great Creator, and are not merely suspended there as brilliants, for the admiration of feeble mortals.

'When I behold this goodly frame, this world
Of heaven and earth consisting, and compute
Their magnitudes, this earth a spot, a grain,
An atom, with the firmament compared
And all her numbered stars, that seem to roll
Spaces incomprehensible (for such
Their distance argues, and their swift return
Diurnal) merely to officiate light
Round this opaceous earth, this punctual spot

Of day and night; in all their vast survey
Useless besides: reasoning I oft admire
How nature, wise and frugal, could commit
Such disproportions.'

'By thy command the moon, as day-light fades,
Lifts her broad circle in the deep'ning shades:
Array'd in glory, and enthron'd in light,
She breaks the solemn terrors of the night:
Sweetly inconstant in her varying flame,
She changes still, another, yet the same!
Now in decrease, by slow degrees she shrouds
Her fading lustre in a veil of clouds;
Now of increase, her gath'ring beams display
A blaze of light, and give a paler day;
Ten thousand stars adorn her glitt'ring train,
Fall when she falls, and rise with her again;
And o'er the deserts of the sky unfold
Their burning spangles of sidereal gold:
Through the wide heav'ns she moves serenely bright,
Queen of the gay attendants of the night;
Orb above orb in sweet confusion lies,
And with a bright disorder paint the skies.' BROOME.

They are all, no doubt, what they are supposed to be, papa, suns, and systems, and worlds in number incalculable, and not to be ascertained. He who made them, said, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them."

'To count their numbers, were to count the sands,
That ride in whirlwinds, the parch'd Lybian air;
Or waves that, when the blustering north embroils
The Baltic, thunder on the German shore.'

Recollect, Georgiana, that many of the constellations retain their ancient names, as we find in the book of Job. "Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades." Job ix. 9. "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?" Job xxxviii. 31, 32.

I cannot find Mazzaroth among the constellations, what is the meaning of the word, papa?

It is a Hebrew term, the meaning of which is, zodiac, and zodiac means a zone or girdle, which encompasses the orbits of the planets, and the high vault of heaven, to the extent of about eight degrees on each side the ecliptic.

The contemplation of the starry heavens is indeed of very ancient date, and seems to have engaged the attention of men long before the shepherds of the east made their observations. It must

always be a subject of deep interest, while "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge."

'Thee, nature's God!
First source of all things lovely, all things good!
Thee all things own!—Thou speak'st, and it is day:
Obedient to thy nod, alternate night
Obscures the world. The seasons at thy call,
Succeed in train, and lead the year around.'

These lines are very beautiful, papa, but how much does all human composition sink beneath that of divine inspiration!

The ancients had strange ideas respecting eclipses; they imagined that they were the awful presages of most direful events.

Yes, my dear. In more recent times, the natives of Mexico believed the sun and moon to be at variance with each other; and the Chinese have formed even a more whimsical supposition, that eclipses

are great flying dragons, which come with open jaws to devour the sun and moon; and to terrify the monster, they rattle drums and brass kettles, till they think he has let go his prey.

These chimeras give great cause for thankfulness to the Christian, to whom light and knowledge have been given.

The rise and fall of the waters, also, seemed to the ancients a prodigy in nature, not to be accounted for. It is related of their great oracle of antiquity, (Aristotle) that he threw himself into the sea, in order to follow the tide in its reflux, and discover where it would go, as every other means to find out its motions had failed.

Such an experiment would avail him little, papa. I remember reading of a more ludicrous fantasy of Kepler's. In one of his reveries, he imagined that the earth was a great animal, and that the flux and reflux of the sea was the effect of its breathing: that the human race are

among the insects which feed upon it, that all the plants and trees are bristles growing on its back, and all the seas and rivers are liquids circulating through its veins.

All this may serve to prove, Georgiana, that there is no absurdity too gross for the unenlightened understanding of man. In temporal, as well as spiritual things, if the Lord does not remove the veil, all is dark and impenetrable.

How wonderfully it was taken from Sir Isaac Newton, papa!

Yes, my dear, he was indeed a chosen and highly-gifted instrument in the hands of providence, in finding out, and revealing the causes and effects of many natural phenomena, which before his time were hidden from the researches of mortals. He clearly demonstrates that the planetary attraction is the same principle as gravitation, and that to it we are indebted for the periodical flux and reflux of the tides.

'For this the moon thro' heav'ns blue concave glides,
And into motion charms th' expanding tides;
While earth impetuous round her axle rolls,
Exalts her wat'ry zone, and sinks the poles.'

I think, papa, I can repeat some lines on the same subject.

'The horned moon renews
Her waning light, and her whole visage shews:
Fulfils her course in circles yet unknown,
And cheers mankind with lustre not her own.
Pale terror flies before her friendly ray,
The traveller, benighted, finds his way:
Her destin'd rule o'er ocean she presides,
And pours upon the shore the lagging tides.'[1]

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[1] "When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens. The seas also are obedient to the command of Him who gathered the waters together at the first. Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Job xxxviii. 11.

'Thus far shall thy flux and reflux extend. The tides are marvellously limited and regulated, not only by the lunar and solar attraction, but by the quantum of time required to remove any part of the earth's surface, by its rotation round its axis, from under the immediate attractive influence of the sun and moon. Hence the attraction of the sun and moon, and the gravitation of the sea to its own centre, which prevent too great a flux on the one hand, and too great reflux on the other, are some of those bars and doors by which its proud waves are stayed and prevented from coming further.'

"Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places. He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh

The moon's lustre is indeed a borrowed one, Georgiana.

'Turn'd to the sun, direct her spotted disk
Shews mountains rise, umbrageous dales descend,
And caverns deep, as optic tube descries.'

The attraction of the particles of bodies for each other, is exemplified by small quantities of water, or other fluids, which, when dropped upon a flat surface, form themselves into spherical masses.

'That very law which moulds a tear,
And bids it trickle from its source,
That law preserves the earth a sphere,
And guides the planets in their course.'

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lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries." Ps. cxxxv, 6, 7.

'He causes the small aqueous particles to evaporate, and to ascend into the atmosphere as vapour, and then by the gravity of the air, to be suspended at different heights in the form of clouds, as reservoirs for the purpose of furnishing rain for watering the earth.'

It may with much propriety be said, that by *wisdom* He made the heavens.

'In the contrivance of the celestial bodies—in their specific gravities, revolutions, connexions, influences on each other, revolutions, &c.; and in the wonderful adaptation of the atmosphere, for the purpose of refracting the light, forming rain, dew, snow, &c. are exhibited the most astonishing displays of the divine wisdom.'

We are in a very poetic humour to-day, papa, I think.

I think so too, Georgiana; I like to be able to recollect and apply the beautiful effusions of our celebrated poets, to the subjects we are upon. Now, however, it is time to concludė our conversation. Your mamma is probably waiting breakfast for us.

CONVERSATION VI.

"He spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood still."

THE wet weather, and visitors, have caused a long interruption, my dear child, to our conversations; but I trust that the last subject we were upon has not passed from your recollection.

No indeed, papa, and I have every day been longing to renew it; and have been storing my memory with some hymns, which I think you will like me to repeat. Sometimes I feel, papa, as if the works of the Creator are too sublime and awful for my thoughts to dwell upon. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."

'The sky's a veil, the outward scene
Proclaims the majesty within;
Which boundless light, tho' hid behind,
Breaks out too great to be confined.

The heav'n thy glorious impress wears,
Thy image glitters in the stars;
The firmament, thine high abode,
Seems, too, the spangled robe of God.

Whene'er its beauty I admire,
Its radiant globes direct me higher;
In silent praise they point to thee,
All light, all eye, all majesty!

Yes, Lord, each shining orb declares
Thy name in dazzling characters;
As precious gems they dart their rays,
And seem to form a crown of praise.'

All that is right and necessary; the oly Spirit will teach you, and guide you the way of all truth, Georgiana.

Yes, dear papa, *that* I believe, and ery study which points out Jesus to e as my all-sufficient Saviour, is what take most comfort and pleasure in.

"The heavens declare the glory of od." "In them hath he set a taber- cle for the sun, which is as a bride- oom coming out of his chamber, and joiceth as a strong man to run a race.

His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof." How beautifully the sun here typifies the heavenly bridegroom! In his rising he sheds his glorious light around the horizon, that splendid canopy of heaven, whose boundaries seem to touch and encircle this earthly ball.

And when he sinks from our horizon, Georgiana, he leaves a parting train of light, which is called twilight; but the length of the days is calculated from his rising and setting. Here your comparison fails. The sun of righteousness never goes down, the brightness of whose rising diffuses light, and life, and glory to all eternity.

How very melancholy, papa, it is to reflect on the numbers who still sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, whose eyes are closed, and whose senses are shut to all the brightness and perfections of that glorious majesty!

It is a reflection too painful for me to let my thoughts dwell upon, Georgiana; let us rather turn them to the subject we were upon. The sun sinks from our horizon in a flood of glory; and while, enraptured, we gaze upon the splendour of his parting rays, suddenly 'the passing glory disappears;—the short-lived beauty dies away,' and we are reminded of the transient and changeable nature of all terrestrial enjoyments!

Yes, papa, but still they are not gone, they are only changed; and I think the variety is delightful; there is a stillness and softness in the evening hour, which harmonizes the mind to peace, and when night puts on her sable covering, beauties are unfolded, which the sun's brighter rays had eclipsed.

'How beautiful is night!
A dewy freshness fills the silent air.
No mist, no little cloud,
Breaks the whole serene of heaven.
In full-orbed glory the majestic moon
Rolls through the dark blue depths.

Around her steady ray
The desert circle spreads:
Like the round ocean girded by the sea;—
How beautiful is night!' SOUTHEY.

In such a night, Georgiana, those floating worlds, and suns, and systems, which many passages of scripture declare that no man can number, are seen in all their sparkling splendour, revolving their punctual rounds.

I think I recollect some of the passages to which you allude, papa. The Lord God brought Abraham "abroad, and said, Look now towards heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, so shall thy seed be." And again, papa, the Lord, speaking to the prophet Jeremiah, said, "As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured; so will I multiply the seed of David." He also compares them with the dust of the earth; "spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south." Gen. xxviii. 14.

This, Georgiana, opens another very delightful theme for our meditations: the contemplation of that countless multitude of the redeemed, crowding heaven's portals, who are the seed of Abraham, the faithful flock of Christ, purchased by his blood: these are fully described in the 7th chapter of the Apocalypse. After having enumerated those of the different tribes of Israel, which were sealed the servants of God, the divine record adds, "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and crying with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." We may compare the saved among the tribes of Israel, which are numbered, to the planetary system, the number of which have been nearly ascertained; and then the myriads of stars,

countless as the grains of sand on the sea-shore, to the numberless throng, of whom it is said, "I will also give thee for a light to the gentiles, that thou mayest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth;"—all these unite in loud acclaim, "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

God alone can number the stars, papa, and call them all by their names. He leadeth them out. There is another comparison, of which this subject may remind us; in observing the continual revolutions of the heavenly bodies, we may say, in like manner, "One generation passes away, and another generation cometh." "The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to the place where he arose."

Very true, my dear. In all the economy of nature there is no standing still; all are moving onward in the prescribed

path. The journey of life never slackens its pace. "Whate'er we do, whate'er we say, we're travelling to the grave."

There, indeed, papa, will be the termination of our journey, 'the bourne from whence no traveller returns.' I should like to know, what kind of star guided the wise men of the East to the place where our Lord was born.

That is a point impossible to ascertain, but we may conjecture that it was some very bright and luminous appearance; probably a meteor in our atmosphere of a star-like form, created by the Almighty for the express purpose of guiding the magians, first to Bethlehem, and then to the very house where the holy child lay. We are not led to suppose that it was a planet, or a comet.

Yet, papa, God could have employed any of these to be his messenger.

Certainly, my love; to their omnipotent Creator all things are possible; still, however, he seldom disarranges his operations

from their prescribed course. This star is mentioned in a very remarkable manner by a heathen writer named Chalcidius, in his comment upon Plato, as foretelling the descent of a God upon earth for the preservation of mankind; and as causing some *wise men* among the Chaldeans to go in search of him and pay him adoration.

How beautiful is Henry Kirke White's hymn on this subject!

"When, marshall'd on the nightly plain,
The glittering host bestud the sky,
One star alone, of all the train,
Can fix the sinner's wand'ring eye.
Hark! hark! to God the chorus breaks
From ev'ry host, from ev'ry gem;
But one alone the Saviour speaks
It is the star of Bethlehem.

Once on the raging seas I rode;
The storm was loud, the night was dark,
The ocean yawn'd—and rudely blowed
The wind that toss'd my foundering bark.
Deep horror then my vitals froze:
Death-struck, I ceased the tide to stem;
When suddenly a star arose,
It was the star of Bethlehem.

It was my guide, my light, my all;
It bade my dark forebodings cease;
And, through the storm and danger's thrall,
It led me to the port of peace.
Now safely moored, my perils o'er,
I sing, first in night's diadem,
For ever, and for evermore,
The star! the star of Bethlehem!"

I have already quoted a saying of Baruch, one of the apocryphal writers, and I now recollect another, which I think equally apposite. 'The stars shine in their watches, and rejoice: when he calleth them, they say, Here we be; and so with cheerfulness they show light unto him that made them.' In like manner Jesus calls upon his elect, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." The stars in the firmament of heaven are called upon to rejoice while they reflect back the light which they receive from their Creator; how much more should we who are numbered amongst the Lord's chosen people joyfully and obediently hear his

call, and give out that light which the sun of righteousness sheds upon us!

The coming again of our Lord in glory, and calling together his elect whose names are written in heaven, is magnificently described, papa,—"Then shall they see the son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, with a great sound of a trumpet, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." These are all to be gathered together in one body, which shall stand "before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands," ascribing salvation to him who washed them in his blood, and separated them from an ungodly world to be his own peculiar people.

The prophet Isaiah, one would imagine, must have had some bright vision of this congregated, countless multitude, when he exclaimed, "Lift up your eyes on

high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by their names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one faileth."

Every effort and invention to facilitate calculation, I believe, papa, has been in vain, to discover the number of the stars?

And always must be, Georgiana; it would be just as possible to count the grains of sand on the sea-shore, as the stars in the milky way, not including other nebulæ.

"Bright legions swarm unseen, and sing unheard
By mortal ear, the glorious architect,
In this his universal temple, hung
With lustres, with innumerable lights,
That shed religion on the soul; at once,
The temple and the preacher! O how loud
It calls Devotion! genuine growth of night!
Devotion! daughter of astronomy!
An undevout astronomer is mad."

I certainly do agree with Young, in this particular, "An undevout astronomer is mad." Who can gaze upon that

field of ether where are balanced myriads upon myriads of suns and systems; of worlds upon worlds, in such extent and magnitude, that thought and comprehension is lost in the immensity, without adoring the Almighty power which first created and still upholds the vast machinery? To look, and think, and say with Cowper, "My Father made them all." *My Father*, whose care is as much extended over my going out and coming in, my lying down and rising up, as it is directed to the preservation of those numberless spheres in their course. On this subject Chalmers is very eloquent. 'God never loses sight of any one thing he has created, and no created thing can continue either to be, or to act independently of him, and then, even upon the face of this world, humble as it is in the great scale of astronomy, how widely diversified and how multiplied into many thousand distinct exercises, is the attention of God! His eye is upon every hour of my existence. His spirit is intimately present

with every thought of my heart. His inspiration gives birth to every purpose within me. His hand impresses a direction on every footstep of my goings. Every breath I inhale, is drawn by an energy which God deals out to me. This body, which, upon the slightest derangement would become the prey of death, or of woeful suffering, is now at ease, because he at this moment is warding off from me a thousand dangers, and upholding the thousand movements of its complex and delicate machinery. His presiding influence keeps by me through the whole current of my restless and ever-changing history.

'When I walk by the way-side, he is along with me. When I enter into company, amid all my forgetfulness of him, he never forgets me. In the silent watches of the night, when my eyelids have closed, and my spirit has sunk into unconsciousness, the observant eye of him who never slumbers is upon me. I can-

not fly from his presence. Go where I will, he tends me, and watches me, and cares for me; and the same being who is now at work in the remotest domains of nature and of providence, is also at my right hand to eke out to me every moment of my being, and to uphold me in the exercises of all my feelings, and of all my faculties."

There is a sublimity in God's own word, papa, which no human composition can approach.

> "His glory covered the heavens,
> And the earth was full of his praise,
> And his brightness was as the light."

You are right, my child, we cannot open the sacred page without meeting with some such luminous passage. The word of God is indeed a treasure of wisdom, an inexhaustible mine,—a well of waters whose fresh springs are continually flowing over.

I greatly admire our Lord's comprehensive and concise manner of describing

the care of God directed comparatively to the most insignificant of his works —"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten before God. But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." And then, papa, he goes on so beautifully to show us how we ought not to be anxious about any worldly concerns, but to trust in him who feeds the ravens, and clothes the lilies of the field, that he will much more feed and clothe us, and supply all our wants, spiritual and temporal. O indeed, papa, I do think it is very sinful not to cast *all* our care upon God, believing that he careth for us. He who gave his Son to redeem us, will he not with him also freely give us all things? Our Father in heaven gives his holy angels charge over us, to keep us in all our ways.

You recollect, Georgiana, by whom, and on what occasion that promise was applied.

Certainly I do, papa; the tempter quoted it to our Lord, who in his human nature would require protection; and as he identifies himself with his people, having taken upon himself the same nature, we also may claim the promise as our own without any presumption. Besides, papa, there are other parts of scripture which clearly prove that guardian angels were exclusively appointed to direct and guard the steps of human beings. When the children of Israel were brought out of the land of Egypt, the Lord said, "Behold, I send an angel before thee, (even Christ himself, the messenger of the new covenant) to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared." Jesus is "the angel of His presence" who redeemed them, and whose voice he warned them to obey. An angel was seen walking with Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, through the burning fiery furnace, whose form was glorious "like the Son of God;" and

God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths when Daniel was closed up with them in their den. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." When "Jacob went on his way, the angels of God met him; and when he saw them he said, This is God's host." "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation?" O, dear papa, I could not tell you all the instances recorded. When Lot lingered, unwilling to leave the guilty city, did not the heavenly messengers lay hold upon his hand, and upon his wife, and upon his two daughters, to take them out forcibly? "the Lord being merciful to him."

Therefore, Georgiana, we should always rely upon the promises of God, and never anticipate evil, being firmly persuaded that all things are working together for good to those whom he has called according to his eternal purpose;—to those

whom he first loved, and shed his love abroad in their hearts by the power of his Holy Spirit. Though their way to heaven be through much tribulation, they will be enabled to say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Our heavenly Father finds it necessary, by some salutary chastisement, to bring our sin to our remembrance.

It is brought to our remembrance to make us hate it, and to make us love the Saviour, whose sufferings and sorrow evince how much He hates sin, while he loves the sinner. Sorrow brought on him premature age. At thirty, he appeared to be fifty. His face was marred, his youthful brow was furrowed; grief blanched his cheeks; his comeliness passed away. Every child of God must also suffer chastisement; but his heaviness endureth but for a night, and joy cometh in the morning. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law"—such chastisement, though

at the time "not joyous but grievous, afterwards yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who are exercised thereby." "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." The ministers of the everlasting gospel of peace, are sent forth, bearing that precious seed, which they often sow in tears, through a sense of their own many infirmities, and a fear lest it should be scattered by the way-side, on rocky ground, and in thorny places where it can find no root. Yet these tried, mourning souls, shall reap in joy; they shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. Jesus is the author and finisher of their faith; the fountain head of all their joys; the fresh spring which always strengthens them; he is the brook in the way, from whence all who drink shall lift up the head.

By such sorrow, papa, the Lord gives repentance unto salvation. I think the expression of Paul to the Philippians is rather difficult: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

It is grievously misinterpreted by many who believe that the eternal salvation of the soul depends, at least in part, upon their own exertions; that, however, never could have been the apostle's meaning; he could not possibly exhort us to do for ourselves what is already done, and what we never could do. Salvation is not only applied to that which the believer already has, but also to that which *he shall have* at the appearing of Christ, when his body shall be redeemed as well as his spirit. When Paul says, "Work out your own salvation," he means, go on to the end of your course, according to his own example, "I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." He adds, "With fear and trembling," that is, with

fear and distrust of self, because of our insufficiency to take a single step of ourselves without falling. "Be not high minded, but fear." "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." We must inevitably fall if not "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein (the apostle adds) ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if needs be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations."

God sends nothing to his children, papa, I feel quite certain, for which there is not a "need be;" yet those who know him not are also afflicted.

In a very different way, Georgiana. They meet with those afflictions (such as the death of friends, &c.) which are the miserable consequence of the fall of man, and such as the whole creation groan under; —but they never feel the intolerable weight of sin; they never humble themselves, and repent in dust and ashes, for having

transgressed against a holy, just, and merciful God. This they have no feeling of, nor have they ever known the heart's own bitterness.

Such a sense of sin, papa, as caused David to cry out, "Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink. Let not the water-flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me."

What first seemed as a miry place, increased to a flood of waters.

"The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves." But when the poor sinner finds them on the point of overflowing,—when they rage horribly,—the inward conflict is calmed by the assurance that, "The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea." His power rules "the raging of the sea." "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still." This is

indeed a great deliverance; it is a communicated peace such as no man can give or take away, even peace in believing.

St. Paul speaks of a godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of.

The effects of which, Georgiana, he describes in contradistinction to the sorrow of the world which worketh death. "What carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of yourselves; yea, what indignation; yea, what fear; yea, what vehement desire; yea, what zeal." Such sorrow and striving against sin worketh out deliverance, which is the true meaning of the word salvation, in the passage you have just quoted also.

Though hard to part with, papa, as the plucking out of the right eye, or cutting off the right hand, if sin be *wrenched* out of the heart, the sinner feels it is the Lord's doing and marvellous in his eyes.

" How shall we who are dead unto sin live any longer therein ?"

Though we have the promises of the Lord, that sin shall not have dominion over us, yet surely it can never be said to be wrenched out of our hearts, Georgiana ; I do not approve of your expression, sin cleaves to the house of clay like the roots of ivy in an old wall. Every stone must be taken down before the roots can be extracted. Yet being in Christ his people sin not. " Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin ! for his seed remaineth in him ; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." This is an assurance of great comfort for all that mourn in Zion, " to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."

The effectual working of God progressively in the soul, which he changes

from death unto life, is well described in the fortieth psalm. "I waited patiently for the Lord and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings, and he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God."

The Rock of Ages is a firm foundation for the sinner's feet; he is no longer a stray sheep wandering from the fold; his goings are established, he shall not slide. "He restoreth my soul, he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." The believing soul runs the race which the Lord hath set before him, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of his faith. Paul likens this race to that at the Isthmian games, "Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize; so run that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate

in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." The crown, composed of dry laurel, or parsley leaves, was erected on a pole at the end of the course, which, those who ran to obtain it, kept in view. Thus Paul describes himself as running the race, "not as uncertainly," not deviating in and out of the line, but forward, with the prize in view; not such an one as theirs, a perishing, leafy, corruptible crown; but an unfading, immortal, incorruptible crown of glory,—about the obtaining of which he felt no uncertainty. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Here the comparison fails; but one only of all who run for the corruptible crown could obtain it; whereas for the incorruptible crown of glory none shall run in vain. *All* who seek shall find, all ar

conquerors through him who is the conqueror, the great Captain of our salvation. He is the only man who endured temptation, and being tried, received the crown of life, which we have his faithful promise, shall be given " to them that love him." He is " the chief shepherd," from whom, when he shall appear, his elect " shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Unto whom he saith, " Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Such a crown as can never be taken from him. It is a glorious, royal diadem, which shall encircle the heads of all the heirs of salvation.

Though God's work in the soul is progressive, yet you tell me that the work of sanctification in ourselves is not. I cannot understand this, papa!

We never in ourselves become more holy in the sight of God. The scriptures give the most conclusive answer to your question. To preclude all self-seeking, Paul says, " But of him are ye in Christ

Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption; that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." "Your righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." Instead of looking into ourselves for increasing holiness, we are exhorted to look out of ourselves to the finished work of Christ: thereby to manifest in the sight of men those fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God. We are not only told, "that all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ," but we are earnestly entreated to be reconciled to God, to put away our natural enmity against him, and averseness to come unto him as a Saviour, who saves to the uttermost; to be reconciled to his way of saving instead of our own. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. v. 18, 21.

The Christian's growth is in spirituality; in the grace of God; in the knowledge and love of the revealed truth as it is in Jesus, and also in apprehending that for which he is apprehended of Christ Jesus. While he sees and bewails the depth of iniquity in his own heart, which every day's experience makes more clear to his understanding, he rejoices in the Lord, "and gives thanks at the remembrance of His holiness." Being thus brought by grace to see what he is in himself, the light which leads him to the Lamb, shines brighter on his path. Peter exhorts believers to "grow in grace," and Paul says, "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth." Where there is a total failure in this last most excellent gift, there is a want of a distinguishing mark of a child of God, and we must

stand in doubt of such a one. "If we have not the spirit of Christ, we are none of his." His love must be shed abroad in the heart where he dwells; from such a root the fruit of the Spirit must grow. The first-mentioned fruit, love, flows back to God its original source; for we love God because he first loved us. If he had not shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, that holy happy feeling, it never could have entered into hearts naturally at enmity with him, and with all his ways.

David could have had no confidence in himself, papa, when he said, "In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust: let me never be ashamed; deliver me in thy righteousness."

Had he placed any dependence upon his own righteousness, shame must indeed have covered his face, but self being cast out, he could boldly approach the throne of grace, saying, "Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth, whose faithful

promise has been given, My people shall never be ashamed."

The change is inexpressibly delightful when old things pass away and all things become new. When as Paul says, "Ye put on the new man, which, after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Ye are now under a new covenant, not under the law, but under grace.

St. Paul was a remarkable instance of the work of sanctification being that of the Holy Spirit; he was a chosen vessel, set apart for the service of God at the very time he was persecuting the the church of God. How surprised he must have been at the heavenly vision! and how undeserving of such a favour!

Very true, my dear, surprise and consternation laid him prostrate on the earth, when the voice sounded in his ears, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And great indeed must have been his joy and amazement, when he heard the answer to his question, "Who art thou

Lord?" "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest,"[1] and then followed the mild message of mercy, "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and the gentiles, unto whom I now send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Here again we are told, that in Jesus is the finished work of sanctification. The work is altogether his own, when he chooses a vessel to purify it for his use. The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the

[1] Acts xxvi. 15, 16.

womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." Being hardly persuaded to believe, Jeremiah said, "Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child." But the answer of God was, "Say not I am a child; Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth." The weakest instrument in the hand of God is mighty, "to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant." Those whom he sends, shall go in his strength, not their own, therefore they need fear no evil; they have his promise that he will be with them to deliver them. To harbour a doubt on this subject, is grieving the Holy Spirit. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."

We are all prone to doubt, papa. Unbelief is a besetting sin. We view the doctrines of the Bible through a dark medium.

The cloud is indeed in ourselves,

Georgiana, not in God's truth, which is as clear as the day-light; but the gift of understanding, like every other good and perfect gift, must come from God.

It is the office of the Holy Spirit to take of the things of Christ, and shew them unto us. He is the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive; but it is given to the followers of Jesus to receive him that he may lead them in the way of all truth. The great shepherd having chosen his flock, putteth them forth out of the common herd, and goeth before them, and he makes them so to know his voice, that they willingly follow him, and follow no other than him.

He is the true vine, and they are flexible twining branches which produce such fruits as they draw from their parent stem. "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine." And Jesus says, "no more can ye, except ye abide in me." And again he says, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have

chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit."

There is no authority, papa, like that of God's own word, whether spoken by his mouth, or the mouths of his inspired writers. I was greatly struck with the force of a passage in Ephesians, which bears upon this subject. "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them." How completely boasting is here excluded: It is entirely of God to "work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure."

CONVERSATION VII.

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." 2 Peter i. 19.

I LOVE to gaze upon the stars on a cloudless night, papa, when I can discern some of the planets, whose size and brilliancy distinguish them from the fixed stars. The pale silvery light of Venus is particularly beautiful; it reminds me of Him who said, "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." Last night, sister Emma and I walked by the river side, watching the moon-beams reflected on its calm surface, and the shooting stars as they glided rapidly across the sky. We staid out so long,

that I was afraid mama might be uneasy at our being exposed to the night air; but I could scarcely prevail upon Emma to return, she was so delighted with watching what appeared to her falling stars. I succeeded in making her understand that the stars did not, and, being so much larger, could not fall upon this earth. Still, she did not know the nature of these gliding meteors.

At her age, Georgiana, it would be difficult to make her comprehend that these are but lambent or fiery particles, confined to our atmosphere, in which they frequently rise to a considerable height, yet are still far beneath the planetary system, or the fixed stars.

Though I have read of meteors, papa, yet I cannot now remember the cause by which they are produced?

They are attributed to the fermentation of acid and alkaline bodies which float in the atmosphere. When the more subtile part of the effluvia are burnt away, the

viscous and earthy parts become too heavy to be supported by the air, and then they fall.

The Ignis Fatuus, vulgarly called Will-o' the wisp, is another gliding meteor, papa, which often puzzles the ignorant, who say it leads those who follow it, as it skims along the ground, into dangerous pools and bogs.

That might very probably happen, Georgiana, being generated in such places. It consists of phosphoric matter exhaled from putrid animalculæ, produced in damp marshy ground. Some electric spark kindles this air into a thin, pale, powerless flame, which flickers in the dark, until its vapoury matter is consumed. Sir Isaac Newton calls it a vapour shining without heat.

Is not the Aurora Borealis attributed to some such cause as this, papa?

It is conjectured that this extraordinary phenomenon in nature arises from exhalations produced from inflammable air,

generated between the tropics, by many natural operations, such as the putrefaction of animal and vegetable substances, volcanoes, &c. The inflammable air caused by electricity, as it ascends to the upper regions of the atmosphere, being of a light essence, is borne on by the motion of the earth to the poles: experience has proved that that which is lightest, or swims on a fluid which revolves round an axis, is urged towards the extreme points of that axis: hence these inflammable particles accumulate at the poles, where meeting with other mixed matter, they enkindle, and thus cause the luminous streaks called Aurora Borealis, or Northern lights.

If that were the case, papa, would not the same kind of lights be seen also in the opposite direction?

Captain Cook makes mention of such an appearance, which he calls Aurora Australis; he describes it to have been a clear white light, shooting up from the

heavens to the eastward, and gradually spreading over the whole part of the southern sky.

How delightful it must be, papa, for the inhabitants of those cold dark regions which lie at the extremity of the poles, to have their long half-year nights enlivened with such brilliant appearances!

Yes, Georgiana. There is no region too dark or distant for the watchful care of God, who wisely governs and provides for every contingency. In the north east parts of Siberia, Hudson's Bay, &c. these appearances are attended by a continual hissing, and a crackling noise through the air, such as is produced by fire works.

"In 1676, on the 21st of March, a very extraordinary meteor passed over Italy, making a hissing noise in its course, like that of artificial fire-works; and when over Leghorn, the report from it was like that of a cannon, succeeded by a rattling noise which continued many seconds, and sounded as if a deeply-loaded waggon

were passing over stones. In size, it appeared larger than the full moon: it traversed through the atmosphere with amazing velocity, and finally went off to sea towards Corsica."

"Two splendid meteors were seen at Leipsic within six years. One of these, in May, 1680, spread consternation among the beholders as it descended north-wards, leaving a train of light; but the second, which appeared on the 9th of July, 1686, at half-past one in the morning, had a much more portentous appearance: it was a ball of fire with a tail so luminous as to enable the beholders to read by means of its light; it remained stationary for seven or eight minutes, then gradually died away. Its circle appeared half that of the moon in diameter. Its distance at Leipsic was estimated to be not more than sixty english miles, and twenty-four perpendicular above the horizon."

In the beginning of this century there were meteors seen in England. "One

which the common people called a flaming sword, was first seen at Leeds, in Yorkshire, at ten o'clock at night, on the 18th of May, 1710. The spectators described it as resembling a trumpet, broad at one end, and small at the other, moving in its course with the broad end foremost over the counties of York, Lancaster, Nottingham, and Derby: in all which places the beholders imagined they saw it fall within a few yards of them; the rays of light it emitted were so bright and sudden, that the people were startled at seeing their own shadows, though in the absence of both sun and moon. In disappearing, bright sparks proceeded from the small end."

"March 19, 1719, a blazing meteor, far exceeding the moon in brightness, though then in the meridian of her glory, was seen all over England. In London, after eight o'clock in the evening, a sudden powerful light burst from the west, and gave out a long stream branching

about the middle; and as the meteor proceeded, it changed its form to that of a pear, tapering upwards, and again to a more spherical shape at the lower end like the full moon, but of rather smaller dimensions: its silvery colour was relieved by a dazzling eye of blue, so vivid and brilliant that it might vie with, if not surpass the sun's splendour in a clear day: the eyes of the spectators could not bear its dazzling light, and in gliding over the sky it left behind it a cloudy track of reddish yellow colour, like red hot iron or glowing embers, which continued more than a minute, then sparkled like red hot iron beat out on an anvil; then grew fainter and fainter, until all disappeared, as did the meteor above the horizon, without any explosion in that quarter. In the metropolis, the light of this extraordinary meteor not only eclipsed the moon and stars, but rendered the lights of candles and lamps ineffectual, and a temporary day-light seemed to illumine the streets."

"It was seen in every part of Great Britain and Ireland, and also in Holland, Germany, France, and Spain, nearly at the same instant of time. Its explosion was heard in Devonshire, Cornwall, and the adjacent counties, from whence the accounts were unanimous in describing the noise to be like the discharge of artillery at some distance, soon followed by a rattling noise, like that of small arms promiscuously discharged. This awful sound was attended by as awful a trembling of the air, which shook the windows and doors in all the houses, and some said the houses themselves, beyond the usual effect of the discharge of cannon, however near."

"Another wonderful meteor appeared at Peckham, in Surry, on the 11th December, 1741. It was like a globe of fire moving eastward, leaving a silvery track behind it: within a few seconds it suddenly vanished."

"A beautiful meteor attracted much

observation on the 18th August, 1783, in several parts of Great Britain. Its appearance was that of a luminous globular ball, which, in its course, changed its form as if it had burst, and afterwards it divided into particles, or a cluster of balls leaving a train behind them; and yielding a light so brilliant as to illumine every object; and in its circuit southward it was continually dropping, or casting off sparks. This beautiful meteor ascended from the north, like the planet Mars, and was seen in Shetland, and parts of Scotland, and many other places. It traversed 13 or 14 degrees of latitude, describing an extent of at least 1000 miles over the earth's surface. During its passage over Brussels, the moon appeared quite red: but soon after resumed its natural light. Its elevation was 50 miles from the surface of the earth, yet at such a distance the explosion was heard by too many to doubt its reality; it was heard in Lincolnshire and Kent, and compared

to the discharge of great cannon at a distance."

"In the same year, on the 4th of October, two meteors were seen in England, the first at three o'clock in the morning was not seen by many people, because of the hour; but those whose sleep was interrupted by those causes which obliged some to exchange their pillow for the morning breeze, described it as rising from the north, not to a high latitude, and that it then remained stationary, with a vibrating motion; it shed a light, splendid as the day, and vanished into air, leaving a train behind. This tremulous and stationary appearance is generally remarked in meteors after their course is ended, just before their explosion. The second meteor was not so large as the remarkable one of August, and was observed between the hours of six and seven in the evening. It advanced from the north like a stream of fire, larger than the common shooting

stars, and after proceeding some distance, it suddenly burst into an intense bright blue light, peculiar to such meteors, most justly compared to the blue lights of India, or to the largest electrical sparks. The illumination was grand, and in the brightest part of its course, it left behind a dusky red train, which disappeared in about a minute, as did the meteor, like the sudden light of a candle extinguished without any apparent explosion."

I have read of fearful meteors, papa, which have passed over different parts of the globe at different periods of time, and which excited much admiration and terror by their explosion in the air, and in many instances their falling in solid heavy substances.

Some of the Aërolites shed a vivid and dazzling light, and seem like wandering stars, which a superior force drags on the confines of the terrestrial vortex. A very remarkable one was observed at Aigle in Normandy on the 26th of

August, 1803; "about mid-day, a rumbling noise was heard from a cloud in the northern direction; this cloud covered a globe of fire, which was seen by the inhabitants of Caen, Pont-Andennes, &c. placed laterally with respect to the meteor. Its movement was rapid and high; at a short distance from Aigle it remained stationary, and after many detonations, a great quantity of stones fell in the space of two leagues and a half; some of the largest of which weighed from 18 to 20lbs. and the smallest two drachms. They were similar to those called *thunder-stones*.

"On the 5th of August, 1812, at two in the morning, whilst the weather was calm and the sky clear, a meteor of dazzling light was seen by some travellers and countrymen in the neighbourhood of Chantonnay, in the department of La Vendée, on the road from Nantes to La Rochelle. It was said to have been seen at many leagues distance; the time of its

duration was not observed, but it terminated in a violent explosion, which was compared to the loudest clap of thunder. In the middle of the day, the master of the farm La Haute Revétison, near Chantonnay, perceived in a field not far from his house, a large stone, which he had never seen before. It was buried two feet and a half in the earth, and had a strong sulphureous smell which it retained six months."

"In 1819, a meteoric stone fell near the village of Dooralla, in India, and spread universal consternation over a country, where the superstitious people look on the phenomena of nature as presages of some awful calamity. The day was cloudless and serene, and the thermometer in the shade stood at 68°. Suddenly, a report louder than that of a cannon, and afterwards a rushing noise, was heard by some people at work in a field, who looking towards the quarter from whence it proceeded, perceived a

large black body in the air moving apparently towards them, but which past on with inconceivable velocity, and buried itself in the earth about sixty paces farther on. This phenomenon, when dug out, and examined by some British officers, proved to be an ill-shapen, triangular stone, something more than 25lbs in weight, and covered with a pellicle thinner than a wafer, of a black sulphureous crust; this aërolite received a fracture which shews the interior to be iron pyrites and nickel; no smell of sulphur was found on it."

The celebrated astronomer Gassendi relates an instance of an aërolitic descent of which he was himself an eye-witness. "On the 27th of November, 1627, the sky being clear, he saw a burning stone fall on Mount Vaisir, in the south-east extremity of France, near Nice. While in the air, it seemed to be about four feet in diameter; was inclosed in a luminous circle of colours like a rainbow, and in its

fall produced a sound like the discharge of cannon. It weighed 59lbs. was very hard, of a dull metallic colour, and had a specific gravity considerably greater than that of marble."

"In the year 1672, two stones fell near Verona, in Italy, the one weighing 300, the other 200lbs. This phenomenon was witnessed in the evening, by three or four hundred persons. The stones fell with a violent explosion, in a sloping direction, and in calm weather; they appeared to burn, and ploughed up the ground."

You spoke once of some fatal consequences having attended the fall of aërolites—What were they?

During the explosion of a meteor near Bordeaux, on the 20th of August, 1789, a stone, in diameter about 15 inches, fell through the roof of a cottage, and killed a herdsman and some cattle. Part of this stone is now in the Greville Museum, and part in the Museum of Bordeaux.

"In the year 1790, on the 24th of July,

between nine and ten at night, a shower of stones fell near Agen, in Guienne, near the south-west angle of France. First a luminous ball of fire was seen, traversing the atmosphere with great rapidity, and leaving behind it a train of light which lasted about fifty seconds; soon after a loud explosion was heard, and sparks were seen to fly off in all directions. This was followed by the fall of stones, over a considerable extent of ground, and at various distances from each other. They were of different sizes, but of the same appearance, the greater number weighing two ounces; but some much more, the smaller ones remained on the surface, while some, with a hissing noise, buried themselves in the ground. This shower of stones did no damage, except to the tiles of several houses which were broken by them, but in falling they did not sound like hard compact substances, but of a matter in a soft half melted state. When they fell on straw it adhered to

them, and could scarcely be taken off; a manifest proof that they were in a state of fusion.

In the year 1795, several persons, near the house of Captain Topham, in Yorkshire, heard a loud noise in the air, followed by a hissing sound, and soon after felt a shock, as if a heavy body had fallen to the ground at a little distance. And, in fact, one of them saw a huge stone fall to the earth, at the distance of eight or nine yards from the place where he stood. When he observed it, it was about the same distance above the ground, and it threw up the mould on every side in burying itself 21 inches in the earth. On being dug up, it was found to weigh 56lb.

On the 4th of July, 1803, a ball of fire struck a public-house at East Norton, in Oxfordshire. The chimney was thrown down, the roof partly torn off, the windows shattered to atoms, and the dairy, &c. converted into a heap of rubbish.

It was of considerable magnitude, and, on coming in contact with the house, exploded with great noise and left a very oppressive sulphureous smell. Several fragments of stones were found on the spot, having a surface of a dark colour, and smooth as if in a state of fusion, with numerous globules of a whitish metal combining sulphur and nickel. The indentures on these surfaces render it probable that the ball was soft when it descended, and in a state of fusion, as the grass, &c, were burnt where the fragments fell. The motion of this fire-ball, while in the air, was very rapid, and apparently parallel with the horizon.

These are not meteors, but Aërolites, which are solid, burning, ponderous masses, impelled with rapidity through the atmosphere, where they seldom dissipate without an explosion, the consequences of which have been in some instances terrific. There are also meteoric stones called *thunder stones*, the descent of which has

been attended with fatal consequences. Some have fallen and buried themselves in the earth, leaving a strong sulphureous smell, and making a report like that of a cannon.

How various and numerous, papa, are the dangers which surround us in our going out, and coming in, in our lying down, and rising up!

Yes, Georgiana, but there is also a superintending providence which guards our steps, which prevents and follows us, which shields us from the terror of the night, and from the arrow which flieth by day. There shall no real evil nor plague come nigh the dwelling of those who have made the Lord their refuge.

The Lord's people, papa, are not, however, exempt from outward calamities.

No, Georgiana, they are not: but they are exempt from every thing really injurious. Those things which may be thought the worst, as well as those which may be thought the best, are all

working together for their everlasting welfare.

I have read of very splendid meteors, papa, and have indeed seen some of them which burst forth in a blaze of glory, and gliding over the spacious firmament, sank suddenly into obscurity, leaving no track behind. Others take a sweeping curve in different directions, then seem to dissolve in light air, or fall to the ground. The cloudless, frosty nights in winter are often beautified by these luminous appearances so poetically described :—

> 'The seeming stars fall headlong from the skies,
> And shooting through the darkness, gild the night
> With sweeping glories, and long trails of light.'

Small meteors are seen in warmer climates, during the intervals of showery weather, of a beautiful bluish white, which sparkle for a few moments, then disappear, leaving behind long silvery trains ; but the largest and most brilliant meteors shoot from beneath the surcharged thunder cloud, during the sultry heat of a sum-

mer's evening. All these proceed from the earth's exhalations, and compound hydrogen gases, which are disengaged, take fire, and almost instantaneously dissipate themselves.

I should think, papa, that the polar lights, by the ancients called *burning torches*, must be the same as the Aurora Borealis.

Captain Parry seems to be of that opinion, in the account he gives of those extraordinary lights, in his journal of a voyage to the polar regions; they are sometimes attended with a crackling noise, which, however, he listened for in vain.

How very beautiful they must be, papa, according to the descriptions I have read, like those lovely coloured clouds which usher in the morning of a fair day, and accompanied by flaming shoots succeeding each other, tinged with the liveliest colours, and variegated at the upper part of the meteor with a luminous network, through which the lustre of the

stars glow amidst the ceaseless agitation, and flames are ejected which furrow the heavens, like shining vapours on summer evenings.

There is another very extraordinary phenomenon seldom seen except in the polar regions, as Greenland, Hudson's Bay, &c. which are the parphelia.

You mean double suns, papa, ; I know they are seen in marshy countries, in Holland, and in some parts of England, in misty cold weather, because, as I have heard, they arise only from the light of the celestial bodies reflected by the mist. I have also read of mock-moons, which are called paraselene ; they have been seen at different periods accompanied by tails and circles. In the diameter of a whitish circle surrounding the moon two mock-moons have been seen at each side of the real one. The sight of the parhelion in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, recorded to have been observed in the April of 1233, must have created great conster-

nation among the ignorant, who could not account in any natural way for the strange appearance of four red suns, which were seen at once. These appearances must have been very beautiful, according to some of the descriptions which have been transmitted to us, mentioning not only two, and four, but even seven suns reflected in all the glittering brilliancy of the various colours of the rainbow.

These suns have been visible from one to four hours; and in North America continue some days visible from sunrise to sunset. When the parhelia disappear, it sometimes rains, or there is a fall of snow in the form of oblong spiculæ; and because the air in that northern region abounds with such frozen particles, even visible, they have been thought to be the cause of all coronas and parhelia.

At Churchill in Hudson's Bay, the rising of the sun is always preceded by a long stream of red light on each side, and about 20° distant. They rise as he rises,

forming there a parhelion. These streams of light seem to derive their source from two other parhelia which rise with the real sun; and, in the winter season, when the sun never rises above the haze or fog, constantly found near the horizon, all these accompany him throughout the day, and set, as they rise, with him. A fourth parhelion has been seen under the sun, but this is a very rare occurrence.

At Danzic, in 1660, Hevelius saw two fine mock moons; the first was on the 30th of March. At about one o'clock in the morning, the moon was surrounded by a whitish circle, in the diameter of which were two mock-moons of various colours, emitting long white beams on each side of the real moon; at two o'clock another larger circle surrounded the lesser, and reached down to the horizon. The tops of both circles were touched by coloured arches, above them, like inverted rainbows. This extraordinary and beautiful

phenomenon continued three hours, then gradually disappeared; first the outward great circle vanished; then the larger inverted arch, then the lesser, &c.

These are redoubled images, or reflections of the same object, papa.

Undoubtedly, Georgiana, and though not very frequently seen, they have been observed in ancient as well as modern times; they are noticed by Aristotle, Pliny, and several others. The former supposed that they are only visible when the sun is near the horizon, though he speaks of two seen in the Bosphorus from morning till evening. The latter discribes the appearance of this phenomenon, and the periods when they were observed at Rome.

In the March of 1774 one of these beautiful appearances visited the horizon from north-east to south-west, and remained stationary without any visible corruscations for half an hour: in colour it was a yellowish white, its breath in the crown apparently equal to that of the

rainbow; as it approached the horizon each leg became gradually broader; its most elevated part was not far from the zenith as it was seen at Buxton.

But one of the most magnificent of these arches ever described as seen in Great Britain, was observed at Leeds on the 12th of April 1783, between nine and ten at night. A broad, bright, flame-coloured arch arose in the heavens, and passed considerably south of the zenith; by its varied density, it appeared to be composed of small columns of light with a sensible motion. This appearance lasted about ten minutes, when innumerable bright corruscations darted in right angles, from its northern side, elongating themselves till they had nearly reached the northern horizon. As they descended, each shooting ray was tipped with a beauteous crimson tinge, like that produced by the electric spark in an exhausted tube. After some time, they ceased to shoot, and spread themselves into a range of bright

yellow or flame-coloured clouds, extending horizontally about the fourth of a circle; its greatest portion which darted northwards from the arch, with the cloud-like and more stationary aurora, became so dense as to render the stars no longer visible. The moon was eleven days old and shone brightly, but did not eclipse this splendid scene. The wind was in the north, a little eastward.

In the same month and year at Leeds, a broad column of light illumined the sky to the west, from whence issued three splendid arches, each of which made a different angle with the horizon. Whilst these were beheld for many minutes with great admiration, a sudden and general blaze of aurora borealis involved the whole space occupied by the arches.

A very fine lunar bow was seen at Louvain, March 22, 1569, and one at Edinburgh, Oct. 24, 1801. On Feb. 13, 1811, a beautiful one was seen by a gentleman near Toulon, at half-past ten at

night. Many others are mentioned, bu the most extraordinary and splendid was seen by Mr. Tunstall, who described it as visible from nine o'clock at night, continuing with different degrees of brilliancy, till past two. It had the colours of the solar bow, but not so vivid, and its arc was considerably a smaller segment of a circle. Its most splendid appearance was at 12 o'clock at night; the wind was very high, nearly due west, mostly accompanied with a drizzling rain. Three of these singular phenomena were seen in 1710, in the same place, though of such rare occurrence, that Aristotle, who is said first to have observed them, saw only two of them in 50 years. They seem evidently to be occasioned by refraction in a cloudy or turbid atmosphere, and indicate stormy and wet weather.

Various appearances have been discerned encircling the sun, such as luminous arches, tails, &c. never clearly accounted for; but the double suns and

moons are attributed to the refraction of the sunbeams upon the minute particles, called spiculæ, of snow floating in the atmosphere.

The aqueous globules disseminated through the air, are congealed within, and liquid without. The dense part intercepting the ray, affords the requisite shade, while the liquid part transmits them coloured by the double refraction. The diversity of aspect depends on the position, quantity, and state of congelation of the globules; and to these causes may be attributed the various coloured circles, or halos which surround the heavenly bodies; which, though most common round the moon, are sometimes seen to encompass some of the planets; as Jupiter and Venus.

The first appearance of this kind which engaged the attention of philosophers, was the Roman phenomenon observed by Scheiner.

Two concentric rings, one bright in

rainbow colouring, much smaller than the other, nearly surrounded the sun. The larger was a complete white circle, passing through the sun's centre, and every where parallel to the horizon. In the intersection of the circle two mock suns appeared; in their centre shining like himself in brightness, but adorned around by rays like the rainbow, one of these parhelia shot forth a fiery tail. Two other mock suns showed themselves on the horizontal circle, white like itself, neither so round or brilliant as the others. There are many more instances recorded of these beautiful phenomena.

I have been told that in the past year, a lunar rainbow was visible at Inverness on a Sunday evening from eight till ten o'clock. It was distinctly formed and very beautiful to behold; spanning the sky from north to south.

"At nine, P. M. on the 5th of April, the weather being very fine, and the thermometer at 18°, a halo was observed round

the sun, which was at times nearly complete. There was, as usual, a parhelion on each side of the sun, at the same altitude, and distinctly prismatic. There was also a third parhelion in that part of the circle immediately above the sun, and this had a peculiarity attending it not observed before. Although the weather was remarkably clear and fine, the atmosphere was full of innumerable minute spiculæ of snow glittering in the sun, which we had never before seen on the brightest sunny day, though such a deposit might often be remarked at times when the weather could not be called hazy, and when the heavenly bodies were distinctly visible. The parhelion above the sun appeared to be evidently formed by the reflection of the sun's rays to the eye, by an infinite number of these spiculæ, commencing close to the observer, and continuing so as to be easily distinguishable for at least one or two hundred yards from the eye. This parhelion might

at times be easily seen to consist of the intersection, or rather the touching of two circles turning opposite ways, of which the plainest was generally the upper one, or that which had its convex side downwards. At about 22° above the parhelion, which was nearly that distance above the sun, a horizontal stream of glittering spiculæ was permanently seen; but there was too little of it to distinguish any regular figure of which it formed a part. This phenomenon lasted above an hour.

Thomson describes these luminous arches—

> Silent from the north
> A blaze of meteors shoots; ensweeping first
> The lower skies, they all at once converge
> High to the crown of heaven, and all at once
> Relapsing quick as quickly reascend,
> And mix, and thwart, extinguishing and renew,
> Each other coursing in a maze of light.

Are the separate flakes of snow the spiculæ?

They are rather the shining particles which compose the flake: examined through a telescope, these are beautiful

points diverging like rays from a centre. They increase in quantity as they fall through the atmosphere, and soft as they appear to lie on the ground, are really hard; being the smallest particles of ice, the sharpness of which you would feel like so many little darts, if the touch of your warm finger did not dissolve them. The whiteness of the snow proceeds from the minuteness of its grains or particles. You may try the experiment by pounding a piece of ice, by which operation it will become white like snow.

'Through the thick air the whitening show'r descends,
At first thin wavering; till, at last, the flakes
Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the day
With a continual snow.'

What a beautiful effect the ice has in the frozen regions near the poles, papa! I forget where I read of the water dashing against the mountains of ice, which freezes into an infinite variety of forms, and makes the distant traveller imagine that he sees towns, streets, churches, and many other picturesque objects.

In Swinbourne's Tour through Sicily: he quotes an account of it, by Father Angelucci.

"On the 15th of August, 1643, as I stood at my window, I was surprised with a most wonderful and delectable vision. The sea that washes the Sicilian shore swelled up, and became, for ten miles in length, like a chain of dark mountains; while the waters near our Calabrian coast grew quite smooth, and in an instant appeared as one clear polished mirror, reclining against the aforesaid ridge.

"On this glass was depicted, in *chiáro oscúro*, a string of several thousand of pilasters, all equal in altitude, distance, and degree of light and shade. In a moment they lost half their height, and bent into arcades like Roman aqueducts. A long cornice was next formed on the top, and above it rose castles innumerable, all perfectly alike. These soon split into towers, which were shortly after lost in colonades, then windows, and at last

ended in pines, cypresses, and other trees, even and similar. This is the Fata Morgana, which for twenty-six years I had thought a mere fable."

You have no doubt heard of this optical delusion, Georgiana.

I have often met with accounts of it, papa, in different travels. It was formerly supposed to have been a fabulous chimera, which the Italians attributed to the magical operation of a fairy to whom they gave the name of Fata Morgana. From the coast of Italy, near the straits of Messina, these deceptions spread themselves over the glassy surface of the water, in lofty battlements, pyramidical rocks, ruinous buildings, towns, spires, forests, and landscapes.

This reminds me of a very graphic description in one of the numbers of the Christian Examiner. I have got it here, and you shall read it for me; which I think will interest you as much as it did me; especially as it took place at the

Giant's Causeway, which you have visited.

'We had now got into the centre of the bay, and could observe the whole bending of the shore from Bengore promontory to Portrush point, and while, as naturally our eyes were principally directed towards the causeway, to which we were approaching, and asking concerning this place and that, one of the men said, 'Look gentlemen, there are the merry dancers on Portrush point;' and on looking in that direction we all observed this most extraordinary phenomenon. Portrush point, which a few moments before presented a very unmeaning appearance, and was certainly the least interesting object on the coast, now assumed a most commanding aspect. A lofty mountain arose instead of a long flat—a conical peak like Creagh Patrick, rugged rocks, with their serrated points pierced the clouds,—and instantly all vanished, and a beautiful softly swelling

wooded hill presented itself, a lofty embattled castle, a broad belt of full-grown wood, green lawns, and all the decorations of a nobleman's domain. You might conceive yourself at once transported to Plymouth harbour, and that you saw Mount Edgcombe before you; and again, as by talismanic touch, all this disappeared, and on a plain two embattled armies seemed to oppose one another, and dense masses of troops, horse and foot, stood motionless as if in suspense for the battle-signal; and now they rushed together, and the opposing battalions closed on each other, and a loose shapeless cloud rose up, as if it were the mingled dust and smoke ascending from the conflict:—and all at once the whole vision dissolved away, and nothing was seen but the low uninteresting penisula of Portrush. I had never before heard of this phenomenon appearing on the coast of Ireland. I had read of something like it as occurring in the straits

of Messina, and on the present occasion, particularly as taken by surprise, my astonishment and delight cannot be expressed. So vivid was the delusion,—so strange, so beautiful, so magnificent was the optical representation, that were I in the remotest part of Ireland, and assured that I should see it again, I should without hesitation put my foot in the coach, and at almost any sacrifice of time or trouble attend to witness it again. The boatman assured me it was by no means of frequent occurrence; some of them declared they never saw it before; he who was best acquainted with its appearance said that it required a concurrence of wind, tide, and weather, which did not often coincide to produce it.'

The writer has added the lines which follow as descriptive of what he witnessed.

"Smooth glides the skiff, and up the rustling sand
Rolls the light surge by Bosca's magic strand;
Where gay Morgana and her fairy train
Sport with the senses of the wond'ring swain:

Raised by her power he sees a warlike line
Of plumy crests and burnish'd muskets shine;
Anon they flit, and lawns, and woods arise,
Chariots, and steeds, and towers that reach the skies.
Now fades the scene, and bounding to the breeze,
Embattled navies sweep the azure seas:
Sail crowds on sail, the boiling wave grows hoarse,
And whitening surges climb each sculptured prow;
Gone is the pageant—vanished from the view,
Like the thin vapour or the morning dew."

I should like to read the whole of this 'Tour to the Giant's Causeway,' papa; C. O. is such a pleasant writer. I like every thing so much that I have seen with his signature, that I wish he would make a great many tours and publish his account of them.

His style is indeed, Georgiana, peculiarly animated and interesting, but what pleases me most is, that wherever he goes he appears to take the gospel with him, and never to lose an apportunity of inculcating it, in so cheerful a strain, that he cannot fail to leave a good impression on the minds of those with whom he converses.

During the expedition of the French into Egypt, when in extreme want of the refreshment of water, as they traversed the sandy deserts, they were tantalized by distant vapours which constantly floated before them as a wide spreading lake. By them this illusion is called *Mirage*.

Burckhardt gives a lively description of the atmospheric delusion of which we have been speaking, 'During the whole day's march we were surrounded on all sides by lakes of Mirage, called by the Arab *serab*. Its colour was of the purest azure, and so clear that the shadows of the mountains which bordered the horizon were reflected in it with the greatest precision, and the delusion of its being a sheet of water, was thus rendered still more perfect. There was at one time about a dozen of these false lakes around us, each separated from the other, and for the most part in the low grounds.'

This deceptive appearance sometimes

assumes the form of an umbrageous lofty tree, under the shadow of which the panting exhausted traveller hopes to find sweet repose.

In the plains of South America, where the air is very dry, Humboldt tells of the images of troops of wild oxen which he often saw as it were suspended in the air, some with their legs on the ground, others raised above it ; sometimes before any oxen were visible.

Mirage is produced by some extraordinary refraction, papa, which the rays of the sun undergo, in passing through masses of air in contact with a surface greatly heated ; at least this is the way I have heard it accounted for.

The way-worn traveller of the arid desert is often cheered by these delusive visions ;—when parching thirst has almost dried up the springs of life, he casts his longing eyes over the boundless sandy plain, again and again, in fruitless expectation of relief. At length the most

exhilarating of objects appears before him; refreshing streams seem to flow, from whence he may drink and be satisfied, and bathe his worn-out limbs. He redoubles his efforts to push forward, but the phantom retires as he advances; and he experiences the additional pang of cruel disappointment.

Thus the followers of the world have their illusive hopes and expectations. which are never realized. "As a dream of a night vision; it shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and behold, he eateth; but he awaketh and his soul is empty; or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against Mount Zion." Turning away their ear from the charmer, charm ye never so wisely, "the lovers of pleasure more than the lovers of God," follow the phantom until it lures them to their own

destruction. The most awful realities they treat as mere illusions, hardening their heart "like an adamantine stone." Repeated rebellions vex the spirit of God, therefore is he turned to be their enemy.

Thus the Lord is provoked to make the land desolate and barren for the wickedness of those who dwell therein. "How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field whither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein?" "They have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness." "They have made it desolate, it mourneth unto me: the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart." "For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black." "All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord God." The total extinction of light is threatened in the day of the Lord's vengeance; "And

when I shall put thee out," (or according to the marginal reading, *destroy the empire*) "I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light." "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day." "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine."

The great power and sovereignty of God, papa, are described in these different parts of scripture: and surely, He, who at the beginning laid the foundations of the earth; by whose word the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth; can, according to his will, shake, or remove any of his mighty works. And although we are told that he will roll them all up as a

scroll, we never hear that he will totally destroy that which he made at the beginning, and pronounced to be *very good.*

On the contrary, Georgiana, His irrevocable promise and decree is passed, "The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end." That the enemies of the Lord shall be rooted out of the land, is clearly and fully described throughout the sacred record, and also that the righteous shall inherit it and dwell therein for ever. "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him," will be the cry of every faithful follower of the Lamb. "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."

There are fearful descriptions of those whom "the Lord hath rejected." They are called "reprobate silver," such as could not be purified. "The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed of the fire:

the founder melteth in vain: for the wicked are not plucked away." These are such as with a bold front presume to lift up their voice against the most High, who "trust in lying words that cannot profit." When God calls to an awful account, "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not: and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, *We are delivered to do all these abominations?*" This is Satan's lying accusation, as if the pure and holy God could be the author of evil; or could decree their abominable works. The father of lies is the master and father they have chosen; the ways they follow, are his; and they are given over to do his work. If the Lord leave us, our destruction is sure. "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." "Behold, ye are of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you."

What a fearful day, papa, will the last day of account be for all who would not have the Lord to reign over them!

It is described in forcible language, "If one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heaven thereof. The earth shall quake. The heavens shall tremble. The sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining." "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come." "That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness." Such a time of horror will surely overtake the ungodly, who will all be swept off the face of the earth with the besom of destruction; and the kingdom of darkness will be totally demolished. The Lord "will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place." Then it

will be seen, that "the Lord is in his holy temple," and the earth will be constrained "to keep silence before him;" for all are guilty; and all under fearful condemnation. "There is none that doeth good; no not one." Then the glory of His brightness will eclipse every lesser light; "then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously."

Then the wheat and the chaff will be thoroughly winnowed and separated. "The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place." That which they trusted in shall fail. Because ye have said, "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves." But in these there is no way of escape. The sentence is passed.

" your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. From the time that it goeth forth, it shall take you; for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report."

While these predicted judgments shall fall with all the weight of the anger of God on the people who are none of his, those who are, shall be as safe as the apple of his eye. When a horrible darkness shall involve the followers of Satan, the children of God shall be hid in the day of his anger. In the " time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to

shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." The time of destruction to the one, is the time of deliverance to the other. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be delivered: for in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call." "The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice out of Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing."

Yes, dear papa, our merciful God has

devised the means of recalling his banished ones. He has laid "in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation." I do not entirely comprehend what follows, "he that believeth shall not make haste."

It means, I think, the trust in God which will be given to his people in that day when the desolation shall overtake the wicked; they shall not flee away; calmly believing that "their strength is to sit still;" they will quietly wait and expect the salvation of God. Believing that the promises of God are all yea and amen, they will be enabled to dismiss all anxious fears; being firmly persuaded that "they who trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever." And that "as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth even for ever."

The church, papa, is Mount Zion, built upon an hill, which can never be

removed; neither can the gates of hell prevail against it; its foundation is sure, its corner stone is precious. How many beautiful passages of Scripture describe it! "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O thou city of God." "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, the city of the great King." "God is known in her palaces for a refuge. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined."

Happy, happy, are the inhabitants of this joyous city, my daughter! "They shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord." "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." "And their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more; for God hath said, I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow." The only real sorrow which

oppresses the Lord's people, is a sense of their own depravity; and their continual proneness to depart from the living God. Unbelief distracts them, they cannot understand the divine record. "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee." Their Father in heaven looks down with pity upon them, and it grieves Him to see their affliction. "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still." "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord: for I am married unto you: and I will take one of a city and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: and I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." The promises of God are very precious to his children; and sin being their most grievous burden, their great consolation is in the assurance, that "neither shall they walk any more after

the imagination of their evil heart." Though sin is still alive in their members, it " shall not have dominion over them. Through the blood of the everlasting covenant, He will make His people perfect in every good work to do His will, working *in them* that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen."

" And my people shall be satisfied with my goodness." While looking for it in themselves, bitter disappointment is their portion, because they seek for what can never be found. The spirit is weighed down by reason of inbred corruption, until through grace we are brought to see that righteousness which is wrought out for all who believe. Thus the Lord satiates the weary soul, and thus he replenishes every sorrowful soul. He strengthens the faint by the knowledge of his free grace and full pardon. For thus saith the Lord, " I will forgive their

iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." It is said, that "the iniquity of his people shall be sought for and shall not be found." These are the "very small remnant" whom Christ hath rescued from the general doom; otherwise all would have been as Sodom and Gomorrah, for all have equally merited the consuming fire of the wrath of God. But "he pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage."

CONVERSATION VIII.

"Look upon the rainbow, and praise Him that made it: very beautiful it is in the brightness thereof; and the hands of the Most High have bended it." Ecclesiasticus xliii. 11.

I FOUND some lines, papa, in one of the Annuals (I forget which), on the rainbow, with which I was so much pleased that I committed them to memory, and if you have no objection, I will repeat them.

"He hath lit up the sky with His thousand rays,
And spread forth His arch mid the sun's bright blaze.
He has spanned the waves with his glorious bow,
And dyed with its colours the ships below.

He hath looked on the clouds, and they've floated away:
He hath gilded the rocks, and gemm'd them with spray:
He hath breathed on the waters, and bid them be still:
He hath hush'd the broad waves with the word of His will.

He hath open'd the heavens, He hath sent forth His showers,
To gladden the field and the spring-starting flowers:
And now He hath gather'd the tears of the sky,
And spread them abroad, like smiles from on high."

I do not wonder that the contemplation of an object so glorious as the rainbow should inspire such lines, Georgiana. As the sign of God's covenant with sinful man, it ought always to remind him of the hand of mercy stretched forth to raise him from the abyss into which he had fallen. It is truly the most delightful object, and the most brilliant and beautiful meteor which adorns the covering of our terrestrial globe, as it splendidly irradiates the dissolving clouds, while the sun bursting through them makes the rain-drops to glisten.

"His pencil, in heavenly colours, made
Of intercepted sun-beams, mixed with shade
Of temper'd ether, and refracted light,
Paints the fair rainbow charming to the sight."

Let me hear, Georgiana, the first account which has been given to us of the rainbow, and on what occasion it was pointed out as the sign of the covenant.

My best way of doing so, papa, will be to repeat God's own words:—

"And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold I, establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth that the bow shall be seen in the cloud. And I will remember my covenant which is between me and you, and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud, and I will

look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." And again God said unto Noah, "This is the token of the covenant."

The history of Noah, Georgiana, is a striking instance of the preservation of the called and chosen of God. Being a believer, he was accounted a just man; perfect in his generations; and amid universal devastation, when the overwhelming flood covered the tops of the trees, and rose above the summit of the loftiest mountains; when "all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened," amidst the din and crash of riven rocks and mountains hurled from their firm bases, the ark alone outlived the tempest, and was borne up securely by the agitated waves which doomed to destruction all which was not found therein. Thus *they* only are safe who are found in Jesus. *He*

is the ark of the new covenant: the only secure hiding-place for his people; their strong refuge; their covert from every storm; and *all* who are not in him must perish inevitably, and for ever. The radiant rainbow spread over the dark cloud, reminds the believer that the anger of God is turned away. And God himself looking upon it, remembers his covenant of mercy. The cloud is the forerunner of renewed mercies. It proclaims the coming shower to moisten and fertilize the parched earth, and when it has accomplished its kindly purpose, the refracted sun-beams produce the rainbow which glistens in the partial cloud. Divine love often overshadows the Christian's path, but the Sun of righteousness rises with healing in his wings, and gilds the passing cloud. As the showers of spring descend to clothe the fields with verdure and the trees with leaves, and return not from whence they came, until they have finished their work;

so will all the purposes of God be fulfilled. As it is written in the Scripture's own beautiful simplicity, "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Peter tells us, papa, that Noah was a preacher of righteousness; and no doubt he warned the guilty race around him, of the flood which would soon sweep away the world of the ungodly.

The building of such a huge vessel as the ark, ought of itself to have warned them. Such a work must of necessity have occupied much time, while those disobedient spirits, now shut up in the eternal prison to which the wrath of God

doomed them, were still in a state of probation, "when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing." But they would listen to no warning; their hearts were impenetrable, and might justly be called "wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom is reserved the mist of darkness for ever." 2 Pet. ii. 17.

The time will again come when God "will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance." Zeph. i. 18.

These are unbelievers, false teachers, upon whom neither the truths of God, nor his judgments, make any impression; as

blind men, they hurry on to their own destruction. *They speak evil of things which they know not*;—whom Jude describes as spots in the feasts of charity, "clouds without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." And while this destruction shall overtake the world of the ungodly, the Lord is with his elect to save them; and though he make a full end of the nations among whom they are scattered, he will not make a full end of those who have found grace in his sight; with whom his covenant is as firmly established as the ordinances of the heavenly bodies. For thus saith the Lord, "If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off the seed of Israel for all that they have done." Jer. xxxi.

CONVERSATION IX.

"Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest." Jer. v. 24.

"THE shower comes down in his season." "As the dew of Hermon, that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded his blessing, even life for evermore." Serle gives a beautiful explanation of this verse in his Horæ Solitariæ: "Mount Hermon is one of the highest mountains in the Holy Land, and though in a region so near the tropic, is always covered with snow; the clouds which lie upon the summit, being brought by the north winds to Jerusalem, cause the dews to fall plentifully upon the hills of Sion. A beautiful illustration this of

the grace of Christ, who is as the dew unto Israel; and who, like the lofty mount of Hermon, collects the heavenly rains which replenish his people with moisture, as that does the hills beneath."

The weary pilgrim is strengthened and refreshed as he journies through the wilderness of this world. "Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance when it was weary." The command is issued, "Drop down ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness."

"By watering he wearieth the thick cloud; he scattereth his bright cloud." God "causeth the light of his cloud to shine." When it seems to threaten most, it is ready to burst in mercies upon the head of his redeemed. "And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds: but the wind passeth and cleanseth them." Job xxvii. 21.

To the natural man, darkness can alone

be discerned in the thick cloud, but the wind passes over it, the wafting of the Spirit of grace, and the darkness passes away, and the bright light is discovered. The Sun of righteousness arises, and the mourning soul is at rest.

"How sweetly parts the Christian sun,
Just like the summer monarch set,
'Midst cloudless skies his journey done,
To rise in brighter regions yet.

"Oh! where the Christian ends his days,
Lingers a lovely line of rays,
That speaks his calm departure blest,
And promises to those who gaze,
The same beatitude of rest."

"It is He that buildeth his stories (or spheres) in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth; he that calleth the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth." Amos ix. 6. "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in his field."

Rain, papa, enlivens the whole face

of nature, the Lord promised it should descend upon the country to which he was leading his people. "The land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and vallies, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land, in his due season, the first rain, and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full." The prophet Joel rejoices in the plenty produced by the rain. "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your

God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, and the latter rain in the first month. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil." "The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."

When rain is withheld, Georgiana, the land mourns; it is a judgment from the Lord. "Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside and serve other gods, and worship them; and then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit." Again it is said, "When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee." By the great power of God, that which afterwards descended in showers of blessing, rushed forwards in

the day of his wrath in a sweeping deluge, to rid the earth of its ungodly inhabitants; but that the flood-gates of heaven will never again be let loose, the bright bow in the cloud is the everlasting token. The covenant is sure, it is ratified by the blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Now "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

From the radiant colours of the rainbow, papa, we may form some idea of the glory which encircles the throne of God; for it is said, that "as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." Again, "And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like an emerald." God is here represented as surrounded by the token of his covenant.

"Triumphal arch, that fill'st the sky
When storms prepare to part,
I ask not proud philosophy
To teach me what thou art.

Still seem as to my childhood's sight,
A mid-way station given,
For happy spirits to alight
Betwixt the earth and heaven."

This beautiful arch, Georgiana, is sometimes doubly or trebly reflected, the interior bow being the brightest, from the rays of light falling on the upper parts of the rain drops, and thence by refraction it is cast upon the inner part of its spherical surface, and reflected to the lower part, where by a second refraction it is bent towards the eye of the spectator. The rays which fall upon the interior bow undergo a double refraction and one reflection before they meet our eye in the colours of the rainbow. In the exterior bow, the rays of light, falling on the lower part of the rain drops, like the former, undergo two refractions, one, when they enter the drops, and another when they emerge from thence to the

eye; but in the interior surface of the drops, they suffer two or more reflections, hence the colours are not so strong and well-defined, and appear inverted. You may make an experiment of this, if you suspend a glass globe filled with water in the sun-shine. With your back to the sun, fix your eye on the globe at such a distance that the part farthest from the sun may appear of a full red colour, then the rays from the globe to the eye will be refracted with the sun's direct rays, and if you keep your eyes in the same position, lowering the globe gradually, those colours of the prism will appear in succession as on the rainbow.

The brilliant colours of the rainbow never fail to excite the admiration of the beholder. There are seven distinct shades, only three of which are generally supposed to be uncompounded, these are the red, yellow, and blue, the blending of which produce orange, green, indigo, and violet.

Since our conversation on the mirage, I have been reading Sir D. Brewster's "Natural Magic," and find in it many satisfactory particulars by which we may conclude that that extraordinary phenomenon in nature proceeds from a reflection of objects which, from the convexity of the earth, are not visible to us. Several very curious instances are given from the accounts of Mr. Scoresby and others.

"M. Hane ascended the Brocken mountain, (which is the loftiest of the picturesque range of the Hartz mountains in the kingdom of Hanover) thirty times before he could get a sight of the far-famed *Brocken Spectre*. At a very great distance he observed a human figure of a monstrous size, which by its mimicking of his actions, he discovered to be the reflection of his own image. In this way (when bathing) we may see ourselves in muddy water, on a bright summer's day."

"The shadow seen opposite to the sun

upon a mass of thin fleecy vapour passing near the spectator, imitates his movements, while the head of the aërial figure is encircled with a halo of light;" which halo may also be seen round the head of the image in the water; not only luminous, but with distinct radiations.

In the straits of Messina, as you have heard) when the surface of the water is perfectly smooth, palaces have been seen depicted upon it, with their balconies and windows; fragments of buildings, columns, pilastres, arches, lofty towers, flocks and herds grazing in their wooded vallies, armies of men on horseback and on foot all passing on in rapid succession.

Sometimes the same objects which are depicted on the sea will also be seen in the air, when the atmosphere is charged with vapour or dense exhalation.

Aërial images of vessels have been seen, which are called *Spectre Ships*, upright and inverted. Mr. Scorseby observed them "extending continuously

through half the circumference of the horizon, and at other times appearing only in detached spots in various quarters. The inverted images of distant vessels were often seen in the air, *while the ships themselves were far beyond the reach of vision.* In a voyage which he performed to the coast of Greenland in 1822, he saw an inverted image of a ship in the air, to which having directed his telescope, he discovered to be his father's ship "so well defined," that he said, he "could distinguish every sail, the general rig of the ship, and its particular character." On afterwards comparing notes with his father he found that it was indeed his very ship, the *Fame*, though at the distance of about thirty miles.

Baron Humboldt saw islands suspended in the air, and small fishing boats, cows, and horses, &c. &c. It is justly remarked that nature is full of the marvellous, and how necessary is the diffusion of science and knowledge, to enable us to account

for phenomena, the supernatural appearance of which must otherwise fill the superstitious mind with terror.

"When, in the midst of solitude, and in situations where the mind is undisturbed by sublunary cares, we see our own image delineated in the air, and mimicking in gigantic perspective the tiny movements of humanity;—when we see troops in military array performing their evolutions on an almost inaccessible precipice; —when in the eye of day a mountain seems to become transparent, and exhibits on one side of it a castle, which we know to exist only on the other;—when distant objects, concealed only by the roundness of the earth, and beyond the cognizance of the telescope, are actually transferred over the intervening convexity, and presented in distinct and magnified outline, to our accurate examination; —when such varied and striking phantasms are seen also all around us, and therefore appear in the character of real

phenomena of nature, our impressions of supernatural agency can only be removed by a distinct and satisfactory knowledge of the causes which gave them birth."

"Not only can these phenomena be explained, but by simple optical apparatus the atmospherical spectres can be reproduced on a small scale."

"The representation of ships in the air by unequal refraction, has no doubt given rise in early times to those superstitions which have prevailed in different countries respecting *phantom ships*."

"The aërial images are obviously those formed by unequal refraction. The pictures seen on the sea may be either the aërial images reflected from its surface, or from a stratum of dense vapours, or they may be the direct reflections from the objects themselves."

But papa, I do not understand the nature of these reflections and refractions.

Perhaps by a very simple experiment, this may be done. Put a shilling into an

empty basin, and let it be filled gently with water; as it rises towards the top, the shilling will become more and more visible, till at length it will be distinctly seen, appearing as if raised above the bottom of the basin; but while the water is poured in, you must stand at such a distance as to see the edge of the basin only. Then you will see the reflection of the shilling rising in the water, and it proves that the rays of light are refracted, *that is*, bent downwards in their passage out of the water, which is the denser medium, into the air, which is the thinner; and meeting the eye in a more oblique direction, the object must necessarily appear to be elevated, and brought into a different situation from that in which it is placed. When a ray of light passes out of one medium into another, it is refracted or turned out of its first course, according as it falls more or less obliquely on the refracting surface which divides the mediums. Place the bason in such a

position as that the rays of the sun may strike upon it obliquely, and observe where the shadow of the rim falls upon the bottom; then fill it with water, and the shadow will not extend as far as it did when the bason was empty, which proves that the rays have changed their direction, by passing out of one medium into another; the less obliquely they shine, the less will they be refracted, and if they fall perpendicularly, they will not be refracted at all.

By refraction we enjoy the light of the sun after he has disappeared below our horizon; and in the morning the sun's rays, in falling upon the higher part of the atmosphere, are reflected back to our eyes, and form a faint light which gradually increases to the splendour of day. Thus the crepusculum, or morning and evening twilight is produced; and by that merciful gradation, we have not a sudden transition from midnight darkness to the blaze of light.

Lest you should not still be sufficiently clear on this subject, it may be further elucidated by another experiment. Here is a vessel in which there is a small opening near the bottom; there is a stopper which I shall put into it, having first placed within a piece of gold, then filling the vessel with water: I shall put you into such a position, that you can merely see the image of the shining substance on the surface of the water; while your eye is still fixed upon that object, I shall draw out the stopper, and let the water run off, when you will be surprised to perceive that the image disappears with it, and conversely when I pour the water back, the image will also return as before.

I delight in such experiments, papa, and indeed, in all the studies to which you lead my mind; but above all these, the study of the Bible, and of the glorious works of the Creator, is an unfailing source of comfort and happiness. Each of the revolving seasons bring their pecu-

liar enjoyments and blessings, and with Cowper I can say,

'Winter has a joy for me,
While the Saviour's charms I read,
Lowly, meek, from blemish free,
In the snow-drop's pensive head.

Spring returns, and brings along,
Life's invigorating suns:
Hark! the turtle's plaintive song
Seems to speak his dying groans!

Summer has a thousand charms,
All expressive of his worth;
'Tis his sun that lights and warms,
His the air that cools the earth.

What! has autumn left to say
Nothing of a Saviour's grace?
Yes, the beams of milder day
Tell me of his smiling face.

Light appears with early dawn:
While the sun makes haste to rise,
See his bleeding beauties dawn:
On the blushes of the skies.

Ev'ning with a silent pace,
Slowly moving in the west,
Shows an emblem of his grace,
Points to an eternal rest.'

THE END.